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The construction of whiteness by white anti-racism educators.

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS BY WHITE ANTI-RACISM EDUCATORS

A Dissertation Presented

by

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work, and that means a tremendous amount to me. This dissertation is dedicated to the two of you. And to my family, friends, and professional colleagues, thank you, for ensuring that I kept focused and sane.

ABSTRACT

THE CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS BY WHITE ANTI-RACISM EDUCATORS

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The purpose of this study is to explore how white anti-racism educators understand and address whiteness in their teaching. This study describes how white anti-racism educators make sense of whiteness as a construct. This includes an exploration of how whiteness is defined, and an elaboration on the similarities and differences between these definitions. In addition, the study explores how white anti-racism educators address the concept of whiteness in their teaching and training.

This study follows a phenomenological approach to data collection and analysis with regard to the research question: *from the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice?* Twelve white anti-racism educators who identify as either university faculty or organizational consultants were interviewed for this study.

Several themes emerged describing their interest in anti-racism education and how their journeys as anti-racist educations began with an early awareness that came from spiritual and religious values, family influences, relationships with people of color, and participation in anti-racism training. In describing the meaning of "whiteness," these

anti-racism educators talked of whiteness as social construction, culture, power, and privilege. Finally, most of them shared feelings of ambivalence, hope, anxiety, and compassion that were derived from thinking about how whiteness has impacted their lives and how they felt they should teach about it.

Important considerations based on this research include the role they play in raising the racial consciousness of other whites, the role of trust in their journey toward being an anti-racism educator, and how high-trust relationships have influenced how they view their work. And finally, they follow a set of principles or guidelines that help them situate whiteness within the context of their anti-racism educational practice. This study concludes with research limitations, as well as future research and practice implications.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

It has occurred to me, more than once, that sometimes a well-placed question can be life-changing. As a college student in the mid-1980s, I was involved in a variety of student leadership positions. As a resident advisor, my supervisor suggested that I join a faculty-student group that dealt with issues of violence against women. The group, "Creating Attitudes for a Rape-free Environment," facilitated workshops in the fraternity houses and residence halls, organized awareness-raising events, and ran a "violence hot-line." Prior to this I had never been engaged in thinking about sexism, at least not in any substantive way. I underwent a major paradigm shift as a result of this experience: from viewing the world as ostensibly egalitarian and with violent acts (emotional or physical) as anomalies in our social fabric to a world where oppression is deeply woven into our social fabric, and violence exists along a continuum and is the inevitable result of acting/reacting to oppression. Social justice became a verb, not an adjective. My work in this group made me reconsider what I was missing.

One of the on-going conversations in our group was the ways in which sexism was linked to other forms of oppression, such as heterosexism, ageism, and racism. The influence on my thinking and behavior was profound. For example, I had been struggling internally for some time with my sexuality – not quite sure how to make sense of what I was feeling and fearing the implications of naming those feelings. These conversations put my feelings in context: I came out. I changed my major from business to sociology,

as human and societal concerns seemed more compelling to me than accounting. And I became involved in a small, fledgling student-run organization dedicated to addressing issues of racial inequality. My involvement with the anti-racism organization seemed to me an extension of my work with CARE, and while I did not have the faintest idea as to what my experience might be like, I knew that it would likely be as profound as my CARE experience. And it was. In the first two weeks of my joining, one of the student leaders asked me, "What, as a white person, are you doing about racism?" and the question completely changed my conception of my role and responsibility.

I remember quite clearly being startled by the question. And also feeling a little defensive. The question itself was not accusatory or demanding, and he did not ask it to "catch me off guard" or blame me. Yet, I struggled to answer it, and I felt exposed. He had not asked me what I "had done" or "was going to do" – he asked me what I was doing presently. And the question called me to be accountable. As a white person, I had a role in all this, and I was responsible for addressing racism. He had linked me, as a white person, to racism in a way that no one had ever done with me before. The question did not bring up the history of racism that I had personally no influence over, but the present context that I did.

I floundered in responding to his question. And after this encounter he gave me Judith Katz' (1978) *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-racism Training*. While I found the book very practical, it took me several weeks and multiple readings to get through and understand the beginning chapter on "racism as a white problem." I found the chapter quite challenging because, for the first time in my life, I was asked to reconsider racism not solely as the problem of people of color but one that I had responsibility for as well. It

seemed like a radical notion for me at the time, and it profoundly shaped my thinking regarding all my campus activities that focused on confronting issues of oppression.

Katz' (1978) book raised a lot of questions for me. My first question was, 'Why hadn't anybody said anything to me about this until now?' And then other questions presented themselves. If I had responsibility for perpetuating racism, then in what ways did this manifest itself? How had racism shaped my values, attitudes, and behaviors? How could I embrace new values, shift my attitudes, and change behaviors? Were other white people struggling with the same issues as I? Who else could coach me – to confront and support me? I felt like I needed more information. All of the history I had read that dealt with racism focused on the experience of people of color, while the role of white people was always in the background.

This research is a partial answer to his original question and the questions I asked myself after reading Katz' (1978) book. I engage in reading, thinking, and working on anti-racism education in my academic, work, and community life. Thus, my reasons for pursuing this project are deeply personal and political. In an attempt to understand how I might be more effective in these various spaces, I decided to examine how white educators deal with whiteness in anti-racism education.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the history of the United States, white Americans have called racial issues "the colored problem," the "Negro-" or "Indian-problem," and more recently, "the race problem" (Omi & Winant, 1994). As Pettigrew (1996) suggests, all are misnomers. Racism is America's problem. Yet the implication of these terms is that racism is solely

the problem of people of color, something with which white Americans need not concern themselves. To address the role of whites when examining racism and its effects is to explore the gap between ideal and reality, between attitude and behavior. It is, as Gunnar Myrdal (1962) has aptly named, the "American Dilemma." White Americans have, however, been intimately connected in the development and maintenance of a system of racial oppression, and this system continues to advantage white people.

Historical attempts to address racism have been directed at ending overt discrimination and increasing economic opportunities for people of color. While some of these attempts have resulted in tangible increased opportunities for people of color, the outcomes have also played a symbolic role – one of maintaining our national identity as egalitarian and fair. The Emancipation Proclamation, which students in U.S. elementary schools learn about as the act that freed slaves, is an example of how the U.S. government responded to the increasing challenges to the institution of slavery. The Civil War was largely a war for economic control of capital markets between the Northern elite and the Southern aristocracy – not the abolition of slavery (Jacobson, 1998; Takaki, 1993; Van den Berghe, 1978; Zinn, 1995). Indeed, as Van den Berghe notes, the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 was largely a tactical maneuver designed to deal the Confederate Army a serious blow. In reality, it was carefully designed not to emancipate a single slave; it excluded the slave-owning border states that fought on the Union side as well as any Confederate land under Union occupation. Thus, as Van den Berghe assesses, "the Proclamation applied only to those areas in which it patently could not be enforced (p. 84)." The outcome of this, however, is seen in historical terms as a move toward the American ethic of freedom, fairness, and equality.

Historical efforts to address racism have been to ameliorate the effects of racism on people of color. Historical efforts to address racism have not concurrently changed the economic and social position of white people. Similar to the aforementioned example of the Emancipation Proclamation, the history of racial justice describes a clear effort on the part of white people to control the benefits and privileges they accrue from racism and to keep the fundamental dynamics of racism in place. Historically overt attempts to control the benefits and privileges of racism have given way to more covert attempts in the present time. White America's charges of "reverse racism" and "using the race card" are modern examples of how whiteness repositions itself politically and economically to keep the fundamental dynamics of racism in place, while at the same time these charges call upon the American ethos of fairness and equality as a tactic to deny that racism continues to substantively impact the lives and communities of people of color.

The symbolic role of these advances for racial justice reinforces the notion of America as free and egalitarian, and obscures how racism continues to manifest itself. Ultimately, it provides white Americans a ready-made rationale not to examine the dynamics of on-going racism and their role in this system. Thus, if the United States is basically egalitarian and all its citizens have equal opportunity, then racism is an aberration rather than endemic and systematic. As a result of this notion on the part of white people that racism is an aberration, efforts to address racial inequality have largely come from people of color. The history of racism in the United States, then, is a history of white people's exploitation and oppression of peoples of color and the efforts of peoples of color to confront and address these inequities. To be sure, there exists a thin line through this history of white people working on behalf of racial justice. White anti-

racist role models have existed throughout the history of the United States, from the efforts to end slavery and, later, Jim Crow segregation to present day efforts to create more inclusive corporate organizations, to develop multicultural curricula in schools, or to change national immigration policy. This history of white anti-racism is significant, in that it highlights the responsibility white people have for examining our culpability in the continuation of whiteness and our role in eliminating racism (Hitchcock, 2002; Katz, 1978; Kivel, 1996).

In my work with the Social Justice Education Program, I had the opportunity to explore racism with college students. White students often entered the classroom or workshops looking for the "right" strategies – the language, the tools, and the "know-how" – so that they can avoid acting in racist ways, appear racist, or "insensitive." Students of color entered with a desire to more fully make meaning of the racism in their lives and to develop strategies for interrupting racism and the toll it takes in their lives and communities. The focus of the workshop was on assisting these students to explore their socialization process and to increase their understanding of the individual, cultural, and institutional manifestations of racism. In addition, we would identify ways of taking action against racism and how white people can be an ally with people of color. For the white students, there was usually some degree of anger, resistance, and silence in response to my attempts to engage in conversations that put the problem of racism in our hands. What I asked of them was often "more than what they bargained for." Occasionally, they were open to exploring issues of privilege and their participation in conscious/unconscious forms of racism, but they often wanted to move quickly to the

"now what" process and focus on solutions. Their response often reminded me of my own reaction to the student leader's question in the college student organization.

Until recently, I avoided talking explicitly about "whiteness" in these settings. I operated from the assumption that the focus of my teaching was on the dynamics of racism but not necessarily its corollary – whiteness. The real reason, of course, is that I did not know how to teach about whiteness, nor was I sure whether I had done sufficient personal work to be a useful model. Certainly, I had been working on and thinking about whiteness in my life since my early college days, but the thought of addressing the meaning of whiteness, understanding the evolving literature of "whiteness studies," and teaching about whiteness to college students was more than I believed I could competently manage.

Understanding whiteness is not a new phenomenon. People of color have had to understand whiteness and white people for centuries. The evolution of whiteness studies, as an academic discipline, is a more recent phenomenon (McMillen, 1995). In speaking of whiteness, I mean whiteness as race, privilege, and social construction (Frankenburg, 1994). To speak of whiteness assigns everyone a place in the relations of racism – both historically and currently. As Ruth Frankenburg has stated, "to speak of whiteness... refers to a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination" (p. 11). These "locations" are time and space specific; for example, Chicago police raiding an apartment where Black Panthers lived in December 1969 or California voters' adoption of the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209 in 1995. Whiteness has a history as well as current context. The ultimate goal in examining whiteness, then, is to confront

our own "location" in whiteness – being accountable for one's role in the current system of racism. Thus, beyond an examination of racism in my classes, a focus on whiteness would have required white students and myself to clearly situate ourselves in the American dilemma and to explore how we, in the present moment, are socially constructing it. In short, it was the question posed to me during my college years.

It was in this context that I began thinking about the role of whiteness in anti-racism education. The question posed to me in college resurfaced in a new way. Although we explored white privilege in these workshops, we spent little time on understanding how these privileges developed in the first place (their historical context) and how they continue to shape our understanding of race, power, and oppression. I also began to consider my own history and identity and how these have been impacted by whiteness. Indeed, I came to realize that my very teaching strategy was developed from a perspective grounded in whiteness. As an educator, I was reproducing the very dynamics in the classroom that I was attempting to identify, understand, and interrupt. I began to wonder how I might teach whiteness to white students.

As Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) remark, "such pedagogical work is anything but easy; progressive whites will require sophisticated help and support to pull them through the social, political, and psychological dilemmas they all will face" (p. 23). This, of course, raises other important questions for me: what kind of help and support is needed for white educators? What specific dilemmas do they face in teaching whiteness? How do they negotiate these dilemmas? What are the theoretical "foundations" from which they draw in order to make sense of their work? In my effort to learn how to understand and talk about whiteness as an educator, it has led me to explore with other

white anti-racism educators their understanding of whiteness and how they address this concept within their anti-racism teaching and training.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore how white anti-racism educators understand and address whiteness in their teaching. The literature review reveals an incomplete understanding of how whiteness is understood and addressed by white anti-racism educators. Thus, this study seeks to deepen and extend our understanding of how whiteness is understood and can be addressed by white anti-racism educators. This study will describe how white anti-racism educators make sense of whiteness as a construct, will describe how it is defined, and will offer an elaboration on the similarities and differences between these definitions. In addition, the study will explore how white anti-racism educators address the concept of whiteness in their teaching and training.

Research Questions

The primary research question is: *From the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice?* The following research questions characterize the issues that will be the focus of this study:

How do white anti-racism educators describe their interest in anti-racism and journey as white educators?

How do white anti-racism educators describe their teaching, and what is their approach to their work?

How do white anti-racism educators describe the meaning of whiteness, and what are the underlying themes that account for these views of whiteness?

What themes precipitate feelings and thoughts about teaching whiteness for these white educators, and how has their understanding of their own whiteness influenced their teaching?

Significance of the Research

By engaging with white anti-racism educators and seeking a more sophisticated answer to my research question, "from the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness, and how does it inform my practice?" I hoped to 1) elaborate and celebrate the history of social justice educators, like my college student group advisor, who have been doing anti-racist education and have come to a more nuanced approach to their work by thinking through the complexities of whiteness, 2) come to a deeper understanding of how this evolving notion of whiteness (as articulated and positioned by whiteness studies) can inform my understanding of what anti-racism education is and can be, and 3) provide practical information for social justice educators, and this researcher in particular, to reassess our approach to anti-racism education and develop more sophisticated educational strategies for addressing whiteness in our work.

As I indicated at the onset of this chapter, my reasons for pursuing this research project are deeply personal. Social justice educators on the front lines of anti-racism education have been critical to my own development, and in highlighting the critical work of these educators, I hope to continue the conversation forward about how these educators have struggled and worked tirelessly to affect change. The stories of these educators, detailed in the chapters that follow, show a range of approaches and provide a sense of the impact that these individuals have had in interrupting racism. Community

activists who engage in anti-racist education, college professors who teach about anti-racism to undergraduates and graduates, corporate consultants and trainers who engage in this work in the non-for-profit and for-profit spheres – all have a measurable impact on how white people think about their own whiteness. Therefore, this project is partially intended to highlight the work of these educators in the broader anti-racism work and the role that white educators can play in the work of social justice.

Further, this project also has a political context as well. This research project has become more of a work of scholarship in the sense proposed by Black Studies and Ethnic Studies scholars (Marable, 2000) in which scholarship is a problem-solving process by which we can apply new thinking to social-political issues that manifest in the lives of individuals and communities. Engaging in these critical conversations with social justice educators has created opportunities for us to rethink old problems in new ways. The politics have become clearer to me as I (along with the interview subjects) have grappled with the role of white people in anti-racism education, the emergence of whiteness and white studies as an academic discipline, and the struggle for more sophisticated and loving educational strategies to address the challenges of anti-racism education. Social justice educators on the front lines of engaging in anti-racism educational practice have been thinking through these issues for some time, and this research project hopes to celebrate and extend this thinking.

Secondly, an examination of this evolving notion of whiteness from the perspective of white anti-racism educators will enhance our conceptual understanding of how white anti-racism educators understand and make meaning of whiteness in their work, the intent of which is to contribute to the field of social justice education; this is

one of a few studies that attempt to analyze the experience of whiteness from the perspective of white anti-racism educators. Currently, most of the research devoted to white anti-racism educators is dominated by studies that explore their racial identity development. This study centers on the notion of whiteness, and anti-racism educators' sense of how whiteness impacts what they teach, how they teach it, and their senses of self as white educators.

There is a body of literature, mostly in the fields of teacher education and multicultural education that focuses on the education of white teachers about what it means to be white in a racist society (Mazzei, 1997; McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 1996). The intention of this literature is to help educate student teachers on race, identity, power, privilege, and their role in the educational system. Fewer studies exist, however, regarding the nature of the (white) teachers who teach to white student teachers about what it means to be white in a racist society. Further, within the field of anti-racism education, there is a body of literature that describes its practice (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Brandt, 1986; Katz, 1978). Also within this field of literature, there are studies that examine racial identity development and the role of teachers and trainers in anti-racism education. Finally, critical white studies seek to examine what it means to be white. There is an increase in the number of journal articles exploring what whiteness is, its history and relevance, how it impacts identity and culture, and how it keeps the structure of racism in place (Delgado, 1995; Frankenberg, 1993, 1997; Jacobson, 1998; Roediger, 1991). Accordingly, this dissertation will attempt to bridge the research between these bodies of literature by exploring how white anti-racism educators address whiteness in their teaching.

Finally, this study has practical significance that precedes from the elaboration of white anti-racism educators' perspectives of whiteness in their work. The exploration of how white anti-racism educators address whiteness in their teaching will provide practical information to white anti-racism educators, including this researcher, on potential educational strategies. If, as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) suggest, progressive whites will require sophisticated help and support in the efforts to address whiteness, then this study will examine strategies that support and assist white anti-racism educators in their educational efforts. Strategies for interrogating, understanding, and intervening in whiteness are needed, and their inclusion in traditional anti-racism education and training can provide new opportunities for self-discovery by both educators and participants.

Definitions

Terms used throughout this study are complex and have many possible definitions. Thus, I will provide the reader with definitions of whiteness, anti-racism education, anti-racism educator, critical white studies, and racism that will be used throughout this study in order to have a sense of shared meaning. Further, these definitions provide context for the assumptions that this researcher uses to guide the study.

Anti-racism Educator

Anti-racism educators are individuals who are engaged in the design and delivery of subject matter that analyzes racism through a set of interactive, experiential pedagogical principles. The outcome is to help students to understand the meaning of

racial difference and racism in their personal lives and the social system (Adapted from Adams et al., 1997).

Anti-racism Training/Education

An intervention designed to assist participants in understanding the history of racism in the United States, how to analyze racism in its current manifestations, and determine strategies for actively and consistently confronting racism wherever they occur (Adapted from Katz, 1978; Kivel, 1996).

Critical White Studies

A contemporary movement derived from the earlier work of critical race theorists that seeks to examine what it means to be white, as well as to reconsider other classic works dealing with the white race and its legacy (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997). Critical white studies explore four interrelated areas (Frankenberg, 1997). A first area is in historical studies. Drawing upon social and economic history, as well as anthropology and legal studies, it examines the evolution and development of whiteness and the salience of whiteness to class and nationhood. A second related area examines whiteness in the "contemporary body politic" in Europe and the United States. This literature uncovers whiteness in the formation of structures and institutions. A third area of work analyzes whiteness in contemporary life including the media and in education (M. Hill, 1997). The focus of these analyses is to identify and decenter white dominance, as well as to examine how white dominance is rationalized, legitimated, and socially produced. The fourth area examines racism in movements for social change. It seeks to critique how whiteness manifests itself in movements for social change. All four of these areas are interrelated (Fine, Weis, Powell, & Wong, 1997). Further, the body of work that

comprises critical white studies comes from a range of historians, sociologists, and feminist or cultural critics. It includes literature from the fields of psychology, education, anthropology, political science, and anthropology. Some of this work has been published over several decades, although the bulk of the work is more recent covering the past two decades.

Racism

"The systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States (blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asians), by members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power (whites). This subordination is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society" (Wijeyesinghe, Griffin, & Love, 1997, p. 88).

Whiteness

Whiteness articulates the social construction of race, privilege, and power of white people. "Racism is based on the concept of whiteness – a powerful fiction enforced by power and violence. Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence are justified by their not being white" (Kivel, 1996, p. 17). Whiteness occupies a series of locations and discourses – historically produced and connected, rather than a fixed category of experience and identity. However, to place whiteness at the front and center of discussion is to emphasize that dealing with racism, in its various forms and manifestations, requires white people to explore the multiple ways race and racism shape white people's lives. White people are *raced*, as people of color have been, and racism

can be explored in the many ways it impacts and provides context to white people's daily life – their lived experience. Naming whiteness decenters white people's experience in such a manner that we are forced to consider the relationality of racism. Racism is a relational concept (Appiah & Gutman, 1996; Frankenberg, 1993; Omi & Winant, 1994); and to define another is, on some level, to define oneself. Naming whiteness investigates a point of view as well as a viewing point.

Organization of this Dissertation

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 outlines the purpose of this study and my rationale for engaging in this inquiry. Chapter 2 establishes the context for this study by reviewing three overlapping and related areas in the literature. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological process of a focused, qualitative research project involving 11 in-depth interviews with white anti-racism educators and 3 additional interviews with anti-racism educators who are people of color. Chapter 4 lays out the findings organized by research question and themes. Chapter 5 discusses these findings and provides conclusions for this research, addresses implications for practice, and offers recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on white educators, the theoretical foundations of whiteness, and anti-racism education, and is presented in three different sections. While involved in the anti-racism student organization as an undergraduate, I recall engaging in a discussion with a friend about a white faculty member who advised the student organization. I had always wondered about her motivation for the work, and how she came to understand the issues the way she did. This chapter reviews the relevant literature to my research questions articulated in Chapter One, and on some level, addresses some of the questions I posed to my college friend. In the section addressing white educators, the focus is on why people come to this work. What are the cognitive, psycho-social or emotional reasons white educators offer us to understand their motivations to be involved in anti-racist education? What do their paths tell us about the nature of anti-racism education, and how they use their own journeys as mirrors for developing curricula and interventions in their own anti-racism education work? Understanding the central motivations for white educators' involvement in this work is important as they provide context for white educators' racial identity development and insight into what options and choices are made with regard to activism, instructional design, and intervention. In addition, this section includes an overview of the white identity development literature. Although this study does not address white racial identity development issues, per se, identity development theory provides a useful framework for understanding the life choices engaged in this work. This section concludes by examining

the literature that highlights the role that white educators play in whiteness studies and social justice education. White educators have been involved in substantive ways to the development of whiteness studies, although this has not been without some controversy.

The second section of this literature review is on the theoretical foundations of whiteness. White studies is a developing field of academic inquiry into the histories, lives, and cultures of white people. White studies crosses a range of academic disciplines including psychology, history, sociology, legal studies, anthropology, literature, and communication. The focus of this line of academic inquiry is to understand what it means to be white, historically and presently. While a thorough examination of whiteness in each of the named academic disciplines is outside the scope of this review, this review will explore the characteristics of whiteness and the contemporary manifestations of whiteness in U.S. culture from a cross-disciplinary perspective. The contemporary characteristics and manifestations of whiteness provide the content by which white educators teach participants about their role as white people in addressing racism. This section attempts to address the question: what might we expect anti-racism educators to focus on in their work? Similarities and differences in the research will provide important points of connection and departures from the current work of white studies.

The third section of this literature review will examine the history and role of anti-racism education in academic institutions and anti-racism training in organizational life. Participants for this study come primarily from post-secondary academic institutions and trainers/consultants to organizations. In this context, it is significant to review how anti-racism education has developed in both of these institutions, as well as current issues and trends in the field of anti-racism education. Moreover, while an exhaustive exploration of

training models and programs is beyond the scope of this review, an analysis of the educational outcomes of anti-racism education in these institutions will provide context for understanding how participants in this study make meaning of their role and engage with participants.

White Educators

Turning to the available literature on anti-racism efforts by white people, few studies examine *why* white people initially become involved in anti-racist work. Aptheker (1992) and McAdam (1988) chronicle anti-racist activism in the development of the United States and during the Civil Rights era, and while neither focus specifically on why white people became involved, they both indicate that socio-economic class and prior experience were important contributing factors. Aptheker notes that people from poor and working class backgrounds and those who had significant experience with people of color were important contributing factors. McAdam (1988) notes, on the other hand, that young people from middle and "upper" class were more likely to become involved in Freedom Summer and Civil Rights Movement activities. These young people, he adds, were more likely to become involved because of their family value systems, having the time to engage in this kind of activism, relationships with other volunteers, and because of the cultural climate and timing in the 1960s.

Relationships with people of color also figure prominently in research by B. Thompson (2001), Frankenberg (1993), and C. Thompson, Schaefer, and Brod (2003). Friendships, romantic relationships, and interracial parenting between white people and people of color are likely to impact how white people thought of racism and their role in

perpetuating racism; however, as Thompson points out, "interracial relationships are no guarantee that white people openly and consistently deal with race" (p. 334). Thompson, Schafer and Brod also note that white people's interaction with other anti-racist whites had a significant influence on many of the anti-racist activists whom they interviewed.

George (2004) notes that anti-racism covers a continuum that goes from civil rights anti-racism to critical anti-racism, and that much of what has been documented is focused on civil rights anti-racism. Civil rights anti-racism focuses its attention on "the activity of white supremacist groups and/or overt racist acts, attitudes or practices" (p. 15). And while the literature details the activities and events of civil rights anti-racism, the literature does not adequately address *why* whites became involved. However, critical anti-racism, George offers, addresses not only "traditional forms of overt racism targeted by civil rights antiracists, [but] white racial identity [that] is especially seen as a core component in the hegemonic maintenance of racism" (p. 16). More research exists about why white people are engaged in critical anti-racism.

Clark and O'Donnell (1999) suggest that in order to be white and own a white racial identity, white people must first see racism and then admit it exists. Following that, white people must acknowledge that white people benefit, and define it as separate and distinct from racial prejudice that all groups have because white people, collectively, have the cultural and institutional power to enforce our racial prejudices. Clark and O'Donnell note that as white educators teaching critical anti-racism, white students need to be exposed to educational experiences, engage with people of color, and engage with anti-racist whites in order to see racism and white privilege and own a white racial

identity. It is through owning a white racial identity that white people can potentially become engaged in critical anti-racism.

O'Brien (2001) examines why white people become involved in anti-racism work, although she does not examine why white anti-racism educators specifically become involved with critical anti-racism. Her work, however, provides important insights into the cognitive and emotional reasons white people engage in anti-racism efforts. O'Brien interviewed 30 white anti-racists, and several themes emerged from her research. First, white anti-racists become involved because of existing networks. Second, white anti-racists empathize with victims of racial oppression. And third, a pivotal event or experience in their lives proves to be a catalyst in taking on this work.

O'Brien's (2001) research notes that empathizing with victims of racial oppression comes in the form of "approximating experiences" (p. 176). These approximating experiences may, in O'Brien's terms, be overlapping, borrowed, or global. When white people also have a target identity (being Jewish, for example) and have an understanding of the dynamics of oppression, they might be able see how their experience "overlaps" with that of a person of color. White people might have a borrowed approximating experience if they empathize with people of color based on first hand accounts or stories by people of color of the racism they have experienced. A global approximating experience relates to how white people may draw parallels or connections between their beliefs and values regarding social justice and the experience of racism in the lives of people of color. In all of these ways, she notes, white people's empathy with people of color supports their rethinking of the role they play in maintaining a system of racial oppression.

In a similar manner, George's (2004) study explores the motivation and actions of white anti-racists. George concludes that white people in his study

> went beyond antiracist exposure to involvement because that exposure created conflict with prior ideological commitments respondents held. Those commitments were in place due to the culmination of prior civic, religious, and political activity and experience.... When faced with the critique of past work and ideological commitments, when exposed to a critical racial analysis that implicated them as a privileged group, respondents were faced with an ideological crisis. In turn, they adapted and/or abandoned prior frameworks in order to incorporate a critical antiracist analysis. (p. 114)

In these various studies, it is apparent that several common themes emerge regarding the cognitive, psycho-social, and emotional reasons for why white people might engage in anti-racism work. Relationships with people of color and other anti-racist whites feature prominently in these studies, along with exposure to a critical analysis of race and racism. None of these studies, however, address specifically why white people commit to a long-term career of anti-racism education. Beyond the development of a critical anti-racist ethic, why do these white people commit to educating other white people about racism? Further, why do white anti-racism educators stay committed to this work? Little research has been done on why white anti-racism educators come to this work, and why they continue to stay engaged in it over time.

The literature that is specifically about white educators, teachers, and trainers centers on the need for self-reflection and self-awareness in order to teach others (Henze, Lucas & Scott, 1998; Mazzei, 1997; McIntyre, 1997; McLaren, 1995; Sleeter, 1996, 2001). Sleeter (2001) suggests that white educators often bring little cross-cultural knowledge and experience to their roles as teachers; in addition, much of their beliefs about students of color tend to be naïve and stereotypic. One of the implications of this lack of self-awareness, Sleeter suggests, is that education in communities of color is in a

state of crisis. She notes that students of color learn less, become disengaged, and drop out at high rates.

Several authors discuss the reasons that white educators do not have the requisite self-awareness to effectively teach in multicultural educational communities. Henze et al., (1998) note that there is a strong reluctance by teachers to discuss power. One critical reason is due to the invisibility of white privilege (McIntosh, 1992; Omi & Winant, 1994). Another reason is that white educators deny the effects of racism on the lives of people of color (Sleeter, 2001; Tatum, 1992). This "color blindness" serves to effectively silence discussion about the privileging and discriminatory aspects of power. One of the unfortunate results of this lack of self-awareness is that white educators have a limited vision of multicultural teaching (Sleeter, 2001).

Sleeter (2001), Allen (1999), and McIntyre (1997) suggest that white educators would benefit by exploring the history of racism and the histories of communities of color, understanding the influence of culture on customs, learning styles, and group identity, and discovering how racism currently manifests itself. Exploring the history of racism in the United States would provide white educators with a range of tools to understand and make sense of current events. Moreover, understanding the various histories of people of color would provide a greater appreciation for their contributions and struggles. Understanding alone will not equip white educators with the tools and experience needed to teach from a multicultural perspective. The next steps for white educators include self-reflection, dialoguing with people of color, working with other white people on un-learning racism, and interrupting racism where it is encountered (McIntyre, 1997).

In addition to literature focused on the education of white teachers, there exist several testimonials by white educators engaged in anti-racism education (Clark & Donnell, 1999; Howard, 2002; Perry, 1997; B. Thompson, 2001; C. Thompson et al., 2003). They describe the authors' own racial identity development in the context of teaching about racism. Perry also advances a framework for an "engaged pedagogy" (p. 6) which includes cultural relevancy, teacher reflection, pedagogy of hope, and teachers as researchers. The intent of the framework is to provide white educators a way to make sense of their own experience of the anti-racism teaching process. Further, these testimonials provide important evidence as to the motivation for becoming engaged in anti-racism education. For example, in *Becoming and Unbecoming White: Owning and Disowning a Racial Identity*, Mary Gannon (1999) notes that "story after story, experience after experience, I struggled, with my need to feel accepted by the people of color that I interacted with and remained fearful of having to confront my white identity – or worse yet, be confronted!" (p. 154). "Being accepted" into a larger community that she values is a primary motivation, and this coupled with the fear of being confronted, challenges her to reflect on and engage in anti-racist educational efforts. On some level, it is congruent with the story she understands about herself: her self-interest in engaging in the work is based on community and connection.

More recently, in *White Men Challenging Racism: 35 Personal Stories*, editors Thompson, Schaefer, and Brod (2003) provide a forum for 35 white men committed to anti-racism to speak to their own personal experience – their motivations, passions, challenges, and development as race-conscious white people. They confront their personal guilt and shame or rage and blame (Rose, 1991) that "gets in the way" of their

committing to racial justice. One illustrative story is that of Steve Bailey. A white man leading a multi-racial organization, Steve continues to work on the guilt and defensiveness that surfaces when working with other white people who have yet to develop a critical consciousness regarding race and racism, or when people of color confront him on ways he continues to exhibit racist behaviors. Committing to work on racial justice has important personal benefits for white people, and is part of the reason that white people become engaged in the work. Steve offers that through his involvement with people of color, he has learned how to "deal with my place in the world as a white gay man" (p. 147).

In Becky Thompson's (2001) *A Promise and A Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism*, the author weaves together the personal stories of 39 white anti-racism activists. Each of the participants came to anti-racist activism in a slightly different manner. Some were raised in activist households (being "red diaper" babies) while others felt that they had always had an innate sense that they would be involved in work for racial justice. Others were raised in a family where discrimination anywhere was seen as an attack on justice everywhere. Still other participants in Thompson's research were raised in a racist household. Says Thompson, "For many white people who become antiracist activists, the journey toward racial consciousness requires leaving 'the warmth of the embracing, completely relaxed' family once it is clear that the humanity of others is put at risk in the process" (p. 37).

Finally, the literature on white educators addresses their identity development over time. Several models of white racial identity development are cited in the literature including Terry (1970), Hardiman (1982), and Helms (1990). White ethnic identity

development (Phinney, 1989; E. Smith, 1991) is also addressed in the literature on white educators, although to a lesser degree. White racial identity development models are most often cited as they describe processes through which white people journey toward achieving an anti-racist identity: a key condition in engaging in anti-racism education.

Focusing on white racial identity development, the literature notes that each of these models articulates a series of "stages" or "statuses" that white people move through in their journey toward a positive anti-racist white identity. The stages in these models describe a process wherein white people go through a series of challenges to their racial sense of self. These models describe five or six stages that follow an awareness path from unconscious racism to (un)conscious anti-racism. The models are not meant to be linear, but dynamic in nature (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992); white people may move to the next stage in the model, stay in their current place, or move back. Examining white identity development provides an anchor from which to explore and understand the developmental journeys of white anti-racism educators.

One of the most often cited models in the literature regarding white anti-racism educators is Helms' (1990) White Racial Identity Model. In this model, Helms posits that racism is damaging to the development of a positive white racial identity for white people, and that through contact with people of color, white people engage with the idea of whiteness (p. 51). Contact happens both vicariously and directly. Vicarious contact occurs when an individual receives information about other racial groups through secondary or intermediary sources, such as the TV, music, and film. Most of white people's exposure to other racial groups comes through this kind of contact, and has the most potent impact on whites' socialization process. The other source of contact comes

through the interaction between a white person and member of another racial group, and in order for the interaction to impact one's white identity, the interaction must be salient enough to pose cognitive dissonance for the white person.

Helms' current (1990) model is comprised of two phases with three different stages in each phase. The two phases are based on the Vicarious and Direct contact situations noted above. The stages in the first phase are Contact, Disintegration, and Reintegration. The stages for the second phase are Pseudo-Independence, Immersion/Emersion, and Autonomy. In the Contact stage, the white person is not aware of her own racial group membership. In the Disintegration stage, the white person begins to engage with members of other racial groups and becomes aware of his own whiteness for this first time. In Reintegration, white people can choose to examine their own responsibility for racism or passively accept the information they received through their vicarious contact situations. Reintegration is the stage that potentially leads to the second phase. In Pseudo-Independence, white people have limited relationships with people of color and are likely to intellectualize racism. On-going contact and personal learning often act as a catalyst for movement to the Immersion/Emersion phase, which is an important phase for redefining oneself as a white person. In Immersion/Emersion, white people actively seek to redefine their sense of self, and they do so with different people (both white and people of color) in safe environments. In Autonomy, white people integrate this new identity more fully into their daily life, and they tend to seek more opportunities to interact with people different than themselves.

Researchers utilize models of White Racial Identity Development to articulate the development of white educators (Mazzei, 1997; McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 1993), and to

frame the development of white anti-racism educators (Clark & O'Donnell, 1999; Gorski, 1998). In these studies, the use of these models supports white anti-racism educators in the process of self-awareness and self-reflection, as well as to think through the developmental needs and issues of participants in designing and delivering anti-racism education. I return to a fuller elaboration of how identity development is incorporated in white educators' anti-racism education below.

Whiteness

The notion of whiteness has been developed through the field of critical white studies. Critical white studies are a contemporary movement derived from the earlier work of critical race theorists. It seeks to examine what it means to be white, as well as reconsider other classic works dealing with the white race and its legacy (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997). As Barbara Flagg (1997) has suggested, the focus of much of the literature dealing with white race consciousness has actually been on blacks! She further contends that this exclusive focus is more than an innocent mistake, but rather is a function of white race consciousness and the tendency of white scholars not to define themselves in racial terms or to be explicit in how their subjective view influences their work. In addition, this tendency to focus on African Americans has the effect of essentializing the experience of other peoples of color and dismissing their voices in the literature. Critical white studies is an attempt to focus on whiteness and map its terrain and critically deconstruct its relationship with domination and power (Frankenberg, 1997).

It is important to further elaborate on what I mean by race and whiteness as social constructions. Over the course of United States history, there have been various analyses of race. The literature cites a range of ways in which race has been analyzed and discussed, including physiological, biological, anthropological, legal, cultural, and political (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Frankenburg, 1993; H. Hill & Jones, 1993; G. Martinez, 1997; Omi &Winant, 1994). Through these various analyses, race is viewed as socially constructed such that it has been developed and reinterpreted through a variety of discourses rather than as a fixed and static construct (Frankenburg, 1993).

Both Frankenburg (1993) and Omi and Winant (1994) cite three shifts in thinking about race that highlights its social construction. First, race was seen as physiological and genetic, which argues for the biological inferiority of people of color based on "scientific" evidence. Second, there was the "ethnicity" based approach to race that asserts that we are all biologically similar, but culturally different; moreover, the United States provides opportunity such that failure to "pull one's self up by one's bootstraps" is the responsibility (and shame) of the individual. This "color blind" approach is, in Ruth Frankenburg's perspective, both color and power evasive. This approach both reacts to and builds upon the "biologically inferior" perspective. Both of these "views" of race are based on a white American worldview. The third, and most recent, approach to analyzing race is from a "culture as difference" perspective, but this time, inequality refers not to ascribed physical and cultural characteristics, but to the institutional structures that hold and convey power. In this approach, it is the systems and structures that inform and provide continuity to beliefs and feelings about race, for example, the practice of "racial

redlining" by banks and mortgage companies that results in discriminatory practices against people of color.

Preceding from the notion that race is a social construct, it is important to elaborate how whiteness is constructed. Whiteness is a system of beliefs about people defined as white, those defined at the borders of whiteness, and those outside of the definition; this system of beliefs has a material impact on everyone defined in the system of race relations (Frankenburg, 1993). Whiteness has been constructed, simultaneously, on two different levels. First, who is considered white is one aspect of what whiteness is and how whiteness has been constructed. As Haney-Lopez (1996) observes, since the United States was defined as a "white country," only those considered white were initially allowed to naturalize as citizens. Indeed, this country might look vastly different if the legal system had not applied such restrictions. Thus, those defined at the borders/margins have shaped the nature and character of whiteness. Second, whiteness is a relational concept (Appiah & Gutman, 1996; Frankenberg, 1993; Omi & Winant, 1994), and whiteness is ascribed content and character by how people are defined in relation to it. This includes people of color *and* white people.

From the position of those who inhabit its space, whiteness has always been normative and invisible. Whiteness has embodied truth, knowledge, achievement, success, motivation, the standard for merit, and trustworthiness; many of these notions are drawn from Enlightenment ideals. As Peggy McIntosh (1992) has noted, it is an "invisible knapsack," and this knapsack supports an already material base of capital and status. Rarely is it acknowledged that whiteness demands and constitutes hierarchy, exclusion, and deprivation (Fine et al., 1997). To name whiteness, then, is to consider the

effects of this paradigm of domination on our history and our institutions and how this paradigm has structured our relationships to one another and to ourselves.

Critical white studies scholars note that an exploration of whiteness is important for three significant reasons (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Frankenberg, 1997). First, it is important to mark the seeming "transparency" of white locations, which makes explicit for white people where and how whiteness manifests itself. Making visible whites' complicity with evolving relations of power and domination is an important step toward challenging those relationships. Second, to leave whiteness unexamined perpetuates an imbalance and unholistic understanding of many critical analyses of racial formulation and cultural practice. People of color are subjected to more intense scrutiny, while whiteness remains unqualified and unmarked by history or current practice. Finally, an examination of whiteness offers an opportunity to examine the foundations of all racial and cultural positions. It provides a different lens upon which to think through the evolution of race relations.

Critical white studies explores four interrelated areas (Frankenberg, 1997). A first area is in historical studies. Drawing upon social and economic history, as well as anthropology and legal studies, it examines the evolution and development of whiteness and the salience of whiteness to class and nationhood. A second related area examines whiteness in the "contemporary body politic" in Europe and the United States. This literature uncovers whiteness in the formation of structures and institutions. A third area of work analyzes whiteness in contemporary life, including the media and in education (M. Hill, 1997). The focus of these analyses is to identify and decenter white dominance, as well as to examine how white dominance is rationalized, legitimated, and socially

produced. The fourth area examines racism in movements for social change. It seeks to critique how whiteness manifests itself in movements for social change. All four of these areas are interrelated (Fine et al., 1997). Further, the body of work that comprises critical white studies comes from a range of historians, sociologists, and feminist or cultural critics. It includes literature from the fields of psychology, education, anthropology, political science, and anthropology. Some of this work has been published over several decades, although the bulk of the work is more recent, covering the past two decades.

An examination of the literature on whiteness traces how whiteness can be considered to presently manifest itself in four broad ideological ways. More recently, in *Becoming and Unbecoming White*, Beverly Tatum (1999) outlines four models of whiteness that are similar in character to the four racial projects that emerge from the literature. These models represent Tatum's thinking about what options her students have in answer to the question, "In rejecting a culture of domination and silence about racism, what new identity can emerge?" In the literature, one construction of whiteness is an identity that centers itself on the belief in the biological and cultural superiority of white people over peoples of color (and white Jews). A second construction of whiteness is an identity that centers on the belief of white normalcy wherein advantages are maintained through the denial of racial (and power) differences. A third construction of whiteness posits a white racial advantage as an undesirable, yet unavoidable, aspect of one's identity as a white person. The fourth construction of whiteness that emerges from the literature is one in which white people take up an intentional anti-racist agenda that seeks to challenge the foundations of whiteness. These constructions of whiteness represent a way of conceptualizing how they are manifested in popular political and cultural

discourse. They represent four related but distinct ways in which whiteness is socially constructed and socially reproduced.

Omi and Winant (1994) use the term "racial project" to identify the way in which meaning and structure are made manifest. From their perspective, a racial project is a way to describe what race means in a particular discursive practice and how social and political structures are organized to support that interpretation. In this literature review, "racial project" has been adapted to include the common logic or meaning-making system, political and cultural manifestations, and their characterization of white/people of color relationships. Four different ways in which whiteness may be understood in contemporary society are outlined, and I have identified these as "white consciousness/white power," "white invisibility/white normalcy," "white privilege/white guilt," and "white anti-racism" in reference to Tatum's schema cited above. The lived experience of "whiteness" is complex making such a classification necessarily schematic; the real world of politics and culture, meaning, and practices tend to overlap between racial projects.

White Consciousness/White Power

The white consciousness/white power racial project represents a "political response to the liberal state and reflects a crisis of identity engendered by the 1960s" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 116). It is an attempt to reassert the very meaning of whiteness in the face of challenges by people of color during the Civil Rights era. The Civil Rights Movement contested the value of whiteness, and in so doing, challenged white political

hegemony. Therefore, it is this process of rearticulating or reasserting the meaning of whiteness that is central to this racial project.

The white consciousness/white power racial project is centered on the belief that there is a fundamental and unalterable racial difference between white people and people of color. The main objective of this racial project is to recapture the state that has fallen to "race mixers." The United States, it is lamented, is no longer a "white man's country" and the government has betrayed "traditional values." This project is based on a white racial nationalism, which purports to return the United States to its proper historical tradition. Traditionally, this belief is grounded in biological terms such that white people are biologically superior to people of color, although it often emphasizes and relies upon religious doctrine to account for racial differences (Winant, 1997). The "Christian Identity" movement is an example of this kind of far-right racial project. Christian Identity identifies Jews and people of color as "mud people" whose origins are different from white people. According to Christian Identity adherents, white people are the original Lost Tribe of Israel, Jews are descendants of Satan, and people of color are beasts created by God before He created Adam (L. Ross & Mauney, 1997). Other similar groups, such as the Creators and Creativity, utilize religious doctrine to bolster their white supremacy.

The white consciousness/white power racial project is very aware of itself as a white-identified group. Its white consciousness holds that substantive racial equality contradicts fundamental ideas about the kind of society and nation that the United States is supposed to be. Similar to the white anti-racist racial project, they understand that "white supremacy is not simply an excrescence on the basically egalitarian and

democratic 'American creed,' but a fundamental component of United States society" (Winant, 1997, p. 44). To destroy white supremacy would mean reinventing the country and social order. For white America to come to terms with its own history of conquest, enslavement, and genocide would involve, at a minimum, a deep national reckoning and massive reparations. Thus, the "threat" posed by the Black Civil Rights Movement, among others, to key institutions in the United States and to the majority of the population in material, political, and psychic terms would be profound. The white consciousness/white power racial project is well aware of this, and seeks to advance a political and social agenda that counters the possibility of a socially just society from developing.

White Invisibility/White Normalcy

This construction of whiteness as identity centers on the belief of white normalcy. White advantages are to be maintained through the denial of racial and power differences. It is a conceptualization of whiteness as the standard by which differences are measured. It seeks to render whiteness invisible at the same time it positions itself as dominant. The discourse of white normalcy, universality, and invisibility uses the language of equity and fairness to frame the rules by which race relations should be defined.

The white invisibility/white normalcy racial project operates at a largely unconscious level for white Americans. Frankenberg (1993) suggests that the dominant discourse from this racial project is both color-evasive as well as power-evasive. White people are the un-marked and un-named norm by which people of color are subjects in this racial project. This racial project is characterized by its minimization of racial

differences, its allegiance to socially democratic and egalitarian principles, and an identity that is pro-white and based on a narrative of perseverance, independence, and self help.

This racial project reflects a persistent theme of minimizing the significance of racial differences (Daniels, 1997; Wellman, 1997; Winant, 1997). The grievances of people of color are dismissed or "particularized." The beating of Rodney King or the recent killing of Amadou Diallo by police officers are seen as separate and unrelated incidents – unjust acts in an otherwise just system – rather than examples of a continuing and persistent racist system. An article in the Sunday newspaper on "racial profiling" makes for interesting reading over a cup of coffee, rather than an opportunity for critical analysis of the way in which racism is pervasive and connected. Race difference is minimized, and white advantage/privilege remains unacknowledged.

Another dimension of how these differences have been minimized is through the increase of people of color in popular culture. According to DeRosa (1999), young white people today have more inter-racial contact, more friends who are people of color, see more people of color on TV, listen to more music from a variety of cultures, and may see people of color in positions of power or influence. She adds:

> [T]he superficial multiculturalism of popular culture has a direct relationship to the resistance of antiracism activism… swayed by current hype, many white people believe not only that the fight against racism has been won, but that it is white people who are now at a racial disadvantage. (p. 178)

This dismissal or down-playing of the significance of racial differences comes from the democratic and egalitarian principles that are a part of white invisibility/white normalcy racial discourse. The history of the United States might include slavery, racial segregation, or the internment of Japanese Americans; however, these are constructed as

blights on core American values, rather than endemic to the systems and practices of society. Civil Rights legislation passed in the 1960s leveled the "playing field," and the United States as a meritocracy has been repositioned to provide equality of access and opportunity. Racism is paradoxically irrational and normal because it is inconsistent with the dominant public ideology, yet is embraced by white people in this racial project (T. Ross, 1997). The white consciousness/white power racial project serves an important purpose; it provides a measure for whites to see themselves as different from white supremacists and keep the color-evasive and power-evasive strategies intact and unexamined.

Since democratic and egalitarian principles frame the discourse of this racial project, the United States as meritocracy succeeds. As noted above, the police brutality against Amadou Diallo or Rodney King are seen as separate incidents, unconnected by a larger white supremacist paradigm. They are rendered as individual acts by specific people, rather than connected racist acts by white people. This individuality is one of the privileging aspects of whiteness; thus, white people are able to avoid the accountability involved in confronting the larger system of racism. It is interesting to note that in this racial project, white people never see themselves as a collective, but people of color are always sitting together in the cafeteria (Tatum, 1997). Particularizing racist incidents and universalizing one's own experience keeps the power-evasive strategy intact, and dismisses the experience and voices of peoples of color.

A third characteristic of this ideology is its pro-white identity. The ideology of this racial project holds that "we are all the same." This universalization of experience frames the argument by which white racist practices can be called into question. White

people vehemently deny that they are prejudiced against people of color. Indeed, if everyone's racial attitude was similar to theirs, racism would not be a problem in the United States today. Gaertner et. al. (1997) and Tatum (1997) discuss how aversive racism plays into developing pro-white, rather than anti-black attitudes. Aversive racism "represents a particular enactment of ambivalence when a white person's egalitarian value system is brought into conflict with unacknowledged negative racial beliefs and feelings" (Gaertner et. al., 1997, p. 168). In addition to the un-named pro-white identity fostered through aversive racism, Gallagher (1997) and Tatum (1997) note a lack of ethnic identity. Whites are perceived as "just normal," rather than from an identifiable racial group as "white" or ethnic group, such as "Italian-American."

What marks the white invisibility/white normalcy racial project most profoundly is the incredible absence of race from its ideology and discourse. This absence serves to insulate white Americans and preserve white advantage. This "color-blindness" is an important ideological and discursive strategy (Frankenberg, 1993) that allows whites not to "see" race (or at least acknowledge it) because to do so would be "impolite." The "good white person" does not "see" race because to see race means one is racist, and being racist is "bad." As long as white Americans are "good," then the meritocracy on which the "American creed" is based is credible and legitimate.

The more politically mainstream component of this racial project associates whiteness with a range of capitalist and republican virtues, such as productivity, thrift, self-denial, obedience to God, law, and family, and sexual repression. According to Winant (1997), this permits the crucial articulation of corporate and white working class interests. It seeks to present itself as the hero of disenfranchised whites. At the same time,

its cross-class racial allegiance provides an important ideological and political strategic advantage. Indeed, the connection between class and race in this racial project is significant in that it provides an easy to understand, if not complete, rationale and logic system for its adherents: white people are associated with the aforementioned virtues whereas people of color are not, and the general deterioration of the political and economic systems is a result of the government's intervention on behalf of people of color.

White Privilege/White Guilt

The white privilege/white guilt racial project recognizes the power dynamics of race-based forms of domination and subordination in the post-civil rights era. It is aware of the implications of whiteness on the historical opportunities and experiences of communities of color. Socially, it posits whiteness as an undesirable, yet unavoidable aspect of one's identity. Whiteness is constructed as an identity based solely on privilege; this construction often produces feelings of shame or guilt (Tatum, 1992). As a result, the focus on the individual level of action is "I will stop saying racist jokes," and at the system level, this construction of whiteness sees little space for intervention. The institutional intervention that white people in this racial project often advocate is similar to those in the white invisibility/white normalcy project: minimize differences by focusing on class structures as a strategy for dealing with "living standards" and "opportunity" (M. Hill, 1997; Jensen, 1999).

The white privilege/white guilt racial project is characterized by an evolving awareness of how whiteness maintains a system of advantage for white people and oppresses people of color. White people actively construct a new form of whiteness

through their reflection, question, and action. It is a distinct form of whiteness in that it challenges prior notions of power, position, and justice through an increased awareness of white privilege, while largely maintaining the status quo (Winant, 1997; Tatum, 1999). This racial project is predicated on awareness more than social action. It is predicated on a desire to "know the other," and to exempt oneself from knowing and taking responsibility for the moral and political dimensions of racism in the United States (Jones, 1998).

This racial project is marked by a lot of confusion, pain, and anxiety about whiteness as white people try to come to terms with the implications of their whiteness on people of color. White people are very aware of the implications of their whiteness in a historical and continuing system of racial oppression but are at a loss as to how to integrate this understanding into their identity and behavior. The confusion and guilt comes from mistaking identity with action; white people feel guilty for the color of their skin rather than because of specific acts. Being "white" is seen as synonymous with racism, an identity that is otherwise seen as empty and devoid of content and meaning. Challenges to identity and place in the world – of being "decentered" – produces a lot of anxiety, and results in resistance by white people in thinking about white advantage and racism.

This construction of whiteness is characterized by an awareness of the dynamics of racism, but an inability to determine how to challenge racism at the systems level. Racism is acknowledged at the individual level of prejudice where white people believe they have the most agency (Kivel, 1996). The focus is on "each one, teach one." However, even this level of intervention is qualified in that racism is acknowledged or

confronted depending upon time, place, circumstance, and one's relationship to the actor(s). Individuals who advance a logic and discourse from this racial project do not utilize political and coalition/social movement tools like some of the other forms of whiteness. This does not mean that this racial project is not politicized; indeed, this racial project is highly politicized by *other* white racial projects.

Anti-Racist Racial Project

A fourth way in which whiteness has been constructed (or deconstructed) is an anti-racist posture in which whiteness (and, therefore, white people) are seen as "one pole of an unequal relationship" (Ignatiev, 1999). The goal of this anti-racist agenda is to re-create a society in which all racial/ethnic groups have full and equal access and participation. There are two elements to this anti-racist construction of whiteness. The first element seeks to reinvent the notion of whiteness that has been historically steeped in racist ideology and practice. As Lee Anne Bell states, "our intention is to foster a broad dialogue among the many people... to find more effective ways to challenge oppressive systems and promote social justice through education" (in Adams et. al., 1997, p. 3). The other element of this anti-racist construction is the new abolitionists. Noel Ignatiev (1997) writes: "preservationists [the other element] seek to identify and preserve a white identity apart from white supremacy and racial oppression...abolitionists study whiteness in order to abolish it - not to reframe, or redeem, or deconstruct it, but to abolish it" (p. 7). The focus is on political struggle – rejecting white privilege and refusing to collude with white supremacy.

This construction of whiteness articulates a viewpoint that is philosophically anti-racist and works to achieve substantive racial justice. White people in this racial project advance the goal of liberation for people of color *and* white people. It is perceived that white people have much to gain by working for racial justice; indeed, the humanity of white people is part of the benefit of anti-racist efforts. Whites understand that resources and power – economic, intellectual, and emotional – are distributed in institutions according to a hierarchy based on race (hooks, 1990; Scheurich, 1993). Race and whiteness are seen as social constructions. Whiteness is seen as a system of advantage based on race; therefore, this racial project seeks to transform itself through critical examination and social action (Katz, 1978).

Whiteness from this perspective is understood to change over time and space. It is not fixed and static but is constructed at different times and in different places based on culture, context, relationship, identity, and environment. In the anti-racist racial project, race and ethnicity is interpreted and experienced different on the west coast of the United States than in the southwest; racism manifests itself differently in New England than in the south (Frankenberg, 1993). Both geography and position have implications for the way in which whiteness is constructed, perceived, and contested. Whatever the positions or locations, however, whiteness is about domination rather than subordination, and privilege rather than disadvantage.

This racial project actively seeks to promote coalition building between white people and people of color (Kivel, 1996; Steinau Lester, 1994). Lykes and Mallona (1997) discuss the importance of sharing and voicing one's stories, discovering similarities and differences, and making visible the underlying dynamics of whiteness.

"Encounter workshops" and "multicultural competency building" are examples of strategies to assist white people in thinking through the coalition and relationship building processes.

The white anti-racist racial project has developed a growing literature base on whiteness, race, and racism. As noted in the introduction, critical white studies, multicultural education, social justice education, and American studies, among others, have all worked to develop their own theoretical bases. Social historians, such as Ignatiev (1995), T. Allen (1994), and Roediger (1991), have all offered reinterpretations of historical events that focus attention on the impact of whiteness on historical processes. Hill (1997), Fine et al. (1997) and Delgado and Stefancic (1997) have all developed anthologies of critical white studies. Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997) and Andrezejewski (1993) have recently added to an established body of literature focusing on both the dynamics of social justice and the pedagogical issues involved in educating for social justice. This literature base has provided the context for anti-racist whites to move from theory to practice.

While the critical white studies literature describes the evolution of whiteness, further research is needed on how social justice educators understand and conceptualize whiteness (Titone, 1998). In addition, questions regarding what pedagogical methods are employed to assist students in examining the deep needs, desires, or motivations that are met by the existence of whiteness need further exploration (Titone, 1998). The social justice education literature grapples with this question to some degree, although the primary focus of this literature is on the dynamics of oppression (Adams et. al., 1997).

Anti-racism Education

The history, current trends and issues, and typical learning outcomes in anti-racism education and training are traced in academic institutions and in for-profit organizations in this literature review. While there is a solid base of literature describing anti-racism education in religious and political institutions, this literature review focuses primarily on academic and "corporate" organizations for two reasons. First, the participants involved in this study have most of their experience in either or both of these two institutions. In addition, comparing learning outcomes from two different institutions provides for both comparison and contrast in the subsequent analysis.

Historical and Theoretical Foundations of Anti-racism Education

Anti-racism education as an explicit method for advancing racial justice is based on a range of historical and theoretical traditions. The Civil Rights Movement was the watershed period from which much of the work on anti-racism training and education began (Swanger, 1994). The passing of civil rights legislation resulted in the development of early anti-discrimination training in order to ensure that organizations complied with federal and state laws (B. Thompson, 2001; Swanger, 1994). Thompson notes that training came from several directions, including corporate executives who saw anti-discrimination training as protection from potential lawsuits, clinical and academic research in social psychology and organizational development, the development of multicultural education, and from activists engaged in progressive social movements. She notes:

> [A]lthough this range of influences had the potential to facilitate conversation and action about race in many areas simultaneously, in reality the activist roots of this

> work have largely been superseded by the emergence of what Chandra Mohanty has called "the race industry": a multimillion dollar industry that "is responsible for the management, commodification, and domestication of race" on college campuses as well as throughout corporate America (p. 310).

Adams and associates (1997) suggest several theoretical foundations on which anti-racism education is based. These include laboratory and intergroup education, human relations and multicultural education, cross-cultural and international training, experiential education, black and ethnic studies, and critical pedagogies and liberatory/emancipatory education. Some of the key individuals in the early development of laboratory and intergroup training included Chris Argyris, Richard Beckhard, Ken Benne, Kurt Lewin, Lee Bradford, and Ron Lippitt (Swanger, 1994). Adams et al. (1997) note that this type of education stresses presentation of self, feedback, learning environment, cognitive models, and experimentation in order to develop new patterns of though and behavior. Human relations and multicultural education combine personal awareness with an understanding of power differences at the systems level (Adams et al., 1997). The primary outcome of this education, much like critical pedagogy, is social action (Adams et al., 1997; Freire, 1970/1993; Nieto, 1996). These theoretical traditions have informed the practice of anti-racism education.

Thompson (2001) indicates that from these theoretical traditions, three primary models of anti-racism training practice have emerged. She notes that much of the change orientation of multicultural education and critical pedagogy has been superseded by the domestication of racial justice work on college campuses and corporations. The first of these models is "diversity training." Thompson notes that "although the exercises and presentations in diversity training celebrate people's many talents and cultural backgrounds, their intention is to diffuse conflict and cover over stark and subtle forms of

stratification" (p. 311). The second model that typifies anti-racism training is a psychological model of training that focuses on a "prejudice reduction" approach. This approach assumes that understanding and respecting differences are critical to developing healthy relationships; this approach will often include analyses of power and prejudice at the personal level, but "rarely provides an anticapitalist analysis [which would] disrupt the notion that hierarchies within organizations are inevitable" (p. 312). The third model incorporates concepts from social psychology such as small group interaction and understanding the connections between cognitive and emotional learning. However, unlike the other two models, the outcome of this training is focused on racial justice. An example of this model is the one proposed by Judith Katz (1978) in *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training.*

In reviewing the available literature on white educators and anti-racism education, most of what has been written to date focuses on how white educators can most effectively teach participants in the class room or training room. Another trend encompasses the racial identity development of white educators. And a third trend in the literature on white educators centers on conceptual frameworks for understanding whiteness. Thus, these trends support three important and related fields of inquiry: doing (the practice of anti-racism education), being (racial awareness of educators), and understanding (the foundations of whiteness).

The practice of anti-racism education on college campuses and in work organizations is well documented. Articles and books on anti-racism education on college

campuses span a range of academic disciplines. For example, Levine-Rasky (1997) examines the practice of whiteness among teacher candidates. John Warren (2001) considers how students engage with whiteness in an entry-level communications course, while Seibel (2002) in a related study, examines the contradictory representations of whiteness in literature and composition courses. In these and other studies on whiteness on college campuses, researchers examine the cognitive and psycho-social processes of college students in engaging with materials that explicitly examine whiteness, and the pedagogical implications of addressing issues of race and racism from this approach.

In a similar manner, research regarding anti-racism education in work organizations has also been well documented over the past several decades. Further, the focus of this research is also on the pedagogical implications of addressing race and racism in diversity and anti-racism training. Grimes (2001) introduced the notion of interrogating whiteness as an aspect of racism in organizational studies. In a follow-up study, Grimes (2002) focuses on three perspectives on whiteness in organizations. She reviews a range of magazine and journal articles on "diversity management" and posits that three different ways of interrogating whiteness in organizational life are present: "interrogating whiteness," which works to name, unmask, and de-center whiteness, "re-centering whiteness," which recognizes the difference yet does not include a critical analysis of whiteness, and "masking whiteness," which protects whiteness as an invisible norm. Grimes addresses the impacts of each of these lines of training on participants.

Norma Smith (2001) examines the issue of whiteness and offers a critique similar to Grimes'. Smith asks the question, "How did anti-racist training, with origins in social justice and social change movements, become the burgeoning "managing diversity"

industry, rooted in corporate ideology?" (p. 3). In her analysis, Smith notes that much of diversity training "masks whiteness," or, at best, "re-centers whiteness." And in a theme that Thompson (2001) makes explicit, much of what passes for diversity training in organizations fails to include a critical analysis of whiteness by participants. Thus, the focus in this dissertation project on white educators who deal specifically with whiteness in their anti-racism education provides an opportunity to explore the points of convergence and divergence with white educators that train on "diversity management."

Outcomes of Anti-racism Education

The literature related to anti-racism education broadly underscores three models for approaching anti-racism, and learning outcomes are based on one or more of these approaches. These approaches are: awareness-based training, skills-based training, and/or a community/organization development-based training. In preparing to interview the white anti-racism educators in this dissertation project, I reviewed over three dozen books, training manuals, and journal articles on "diversity" or anti-racism training in order to understand the range of learning outcomes that are typically addressed in anti-racism education. All of the works I examined fell into at least one of the three approaches, and the learning outcomes were consistent with the training approach. Awareness-based training is designed to increase knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity to issues of racism in the United States. This training often examines common definitions of diversity, prejudice, and discrimination; it aims to address common stereotypes and misconceptions regarding people of color. Very little attention is aimed at examining whiteness as a key theme in awareness training.

The majority of education and training manuals, books, and articles that I reviewed come from an awareness-based training approach. Works from the University of California – Berkeley, the Social Justice Training Institute, the Anti-Defamation League's "A Campus of Difference" program, the People's Institute, and others aim to raise awareness of the systemic nature of racism. While several, such as *Resisting Racism: An Action Guide* by Mallon (1991), raise the issue of white people's role in maintaining a system of racism, many do not. Patti DeRosa's (1994) article, "Diversity Training: In Search of Antiracism," categorizes several approaches to diversity training, and examines the elements that support racial and social justice (or do not). Many awareness-based programs, she asserts, address diversity as difference, and do not necessarily provide a critique of power based on those differences.

The second approach, skills-based training, goes beyond consciousness-raising and is designed to provide participants with a set of skills to enable them to deal with campus or workplace diversity. Skills, such as intercultural communication, facilitation strategies, and conflict resolution methods, are covered and practiced. Many education and training programs designed for organizations focus on a skills-based approach. It supports the development of supervisors and senior managers of companies in "managing diversity." Jamieson and O'Mara (1991), Hayles and Russell (1997), Griggs and Louw (1995), Gardenswartz and Rowe (1994), Loden (1996), Livers and Caver (2003), and Carr-Ruffino (2002) are several among a large body of books and manuals that provide educational designs, tips, and tools focused on "managing diversity" through the acquisition or development of interpersonal and intercultural skill sets. Certainly, several of these review and discuss the need for initial consciousness-raising and many also

identify the need to change organizational systems; on the balance, however, they focus on developing competence in managing a multicultural workforce.

Learning outcomes for the third model frequently cited in the literature, the intervention training/workshop, are geared toward equipping participants to assess their current reality (in their community or organization), create a vision of a multi-racial future, and identify systems and processes for moving the group toward its shared vision. It assumes that participants already have the requisite level of awareness and skills to engage in this kind of community building. In Cross, Katz, Miller, and Seashore's (1994) *The Promise of Diversity: Over 40 Voices Discuss Strategies for Eliminating Discrimination in Organizations*, the contributors focus their energy on changing organizational systems as a key feature in anti-oppression work. The approach proposes to "ameliorate" social injustice in organizations, and supports the intervention approach cited above. Education, in this context, is focused on examining and changing the organizational or institutional system.

Challenges and Opportunities

Anti-racism education, with its most current roots in the Civil Rights era, has undergone a series of changes including the explicit goals of such training (anti-racist action to "diversity management"), the training and development of the educators or trainers, and the conceptual frameworks for understanding anti-racism work (such as critical white studies). Presently, white anti-racism educators are confronting three distinct but interrelated challenges: 1) a desire to focus on "managing diversity" rather than on social justice; 2) the desire to focus distance oneself from whiteness; and 3) the

reification of whiteness through "privileged resistance" (O'Brien, 2001). The literature points to various manifestations of these three challenges; however, all three point to possible opportunities in anti-racism education.

Many of the white activists of the fifties and sixties who became involved in and supported the struggle for civil rights – often for no wage – found themselves with children and a mortgage in the seventies and eighties. At the same time, corporations turned to "diversity" efforts to protect themselves from discrimination and harassment lawsuits, and there has been a decided shift away from being connected to "affirmative action" – the very set of laws created to address previous inequities (B. Thompson, 2001). Anti-racist whites, whose hearts are still connected to the idea of equality, have found themselves often in a bind wherein they work for organizations (if they are mainstream) that pay their salaries as long as they support the "managing diversity" philosophy. This philosophy often focuses on working with issues of numbers and representation by people of color and little attention to broader social and racial justice concerns (Swanger, 1994).

Thompson (2001) highlights an on-going challenge for white anti-racists and that is the desire by whites to distance themselves from the full impact of whiteness on the lives of people of color. Instead, white anti-racists focus on the individual level of accountability and how they themselves might have causes harm or injury to a person or people of color. Not fully understanding the breadth and depth of whiteness and its relationship to racism, or fully owning their impact as educators, white anti-racist educators opt for a partial ideology and an incomplete practice (N. Smith, 2001). One of the key opportunities for anti-racism educators, then, is to confront this inherent

contradiction in their educational practice and work toward a more full ownership of how whiteness impacts other whites and people of color.

The third challenge that is a dominant theme in the literature on anti-racism education is the understanding of whiteness and its relationship to racism. In particular, however, the attention by whites on the topic of whiteness has created opportunity for support and recognition that people of color have not been able to achieve. Therefore, in a general way, the limits and boundaries of whiteness continue to be contested in the anti-racism literature that has supported a tremendous growth and interest in the notion of whiteness and its relationship to racism. However, (as a clear example of whiteness itself) "white anti-racism educators have the luxury of being able to be more vocally confrontational about racism with fewer repercussions than people of color would expect to fact for the same actions" (O'Brien, 2001 p. 104). The opportunity for anti-racism educators (both white people and people of color) is tremendous in terms of developing positive, productive cross-race relationships, and advancing the cause of actual equity and social justice.

This literature review covered a narrow slice of the anti-racism education literature available. The focus here has been primarily on the history of anti-racism education and the educational outcomes of anti-racism education. Whiteness, while not a completely new entrant into the field of anti-racism education, has gained increasing attention as to the potential implications and impact on participants by exploring the terrain, boundaries and questions. Thus, in the overall arc of anti-racism educational history, the topic of this dissertation is a decidedly recent phenomenon. Secondly, identifying the educational outcomes of traditional anti-racism education provides a point

of contrast and comparison with the inclusion of whiteness in anti-racism education. This point will be further addressed in the following chapters.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the available literature on white educators, the theoretical foundations of whiteness, and anti-racism education. This chapter reviews the relevant literature to my research questions articulated in Chapter One. In the section addressing white educators, the focus is on why people come to this work. This includes the cognitive, psycho-social or emotional reasons white educators offer us to understand their motivations to be involved in anti-racist education. In addition, this section also includes an overview of the white identity development literature, and concludes by examining the literature that highlights the role that white educators play in whiteness studies and social justice education. The second section of this literature review is on the theoretical foundations of whiteness and provides an overview of the contemporary characteristics and manifestations of whiteness.

The third section of this literature review examined the history and role of anti-racism education in academic institutions and anti-racism training in organizational life. Moreover, it addressed common educational outcomes of anti-racism education, and current challenges and opportunities. Having provided a brief overview of the literature related to this research project's principle question, I now turn to a discussion of the methodology involved in this research project.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how white anti-racism educators understand and address whiteness in their teaching. The literature review revealed an incomplete understanding of how whiteness is understood and addressed by white anti-racism educators. This study seeks to deepen and extend our understanding of how whiteness is understood and can be addressed by white anti-racism educators. A qualitative approach is selected for this study because it readily lends itself to an in-depth exploration of this phenomenon, rather than is constrained by predetermined categories of analysis. Quantitative research methods, on the other hand, use "standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned" (Patton, 1990, p. 14). Patton notes that qualitative research provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view; this approach yields a greater understanding of the cases and situations studied. This approach is consistent with the socially just perspective of respecting and appreciating individual differences and voices.

An Inquiry Paradigm

This dissertation follows a phenomenological approach to data collection and analysis. The use of a phenomenological approach provided me with an opportunity to

examine a particular phenomenon, and to develop and interrelate categories in order to produce a useful understanding of the "essence" of the construction of whiteness by anti-racism educators. Creswell (1998) notes, "a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept" p. 51). Based on Creswell's description of five qualitative traditions, the phenomenological approach provides an opportunity to develop a deep understanding rather than a biography or case study approach that would not produce a deeper understanding of how multiple individuals make sense of whiteness in the context of their anti-racism work.

Primary Research Question and Sub-questions

The primary research question is: *From the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice?* From this primary question, additional questions include:

What are the potential meanings of whiteness? How have white anti-racism educators come to understand what whiteness is and is not? What are the underlying themes that account for this view of whiteness?

What themes precipitate feelings and thoughts about teaching whiteness for these white educators? How has their understanding of their own whiteness influenced their teaching? How has participants' understanding of whiteness changed during their educational journey?

Participants

Following a phenomenological approach, participants for this study are included based on their work as white anti-racism educators. White educators who engage in anti-racism teaching as their life (full-time) commitment were chosen and their participation solicited. In particular, this study focused on white anti-racism educators engaged in teaching on college campuses and white anti-racism educators engaged in teaching in workplace settings. The exploration of this research question with these two different discipline areas is constructed intentionally. First, the educational goals of these two different discipline areas vary, thus they provide a useful point of contrast (B. Thompson, 2001). Also, from a pragmatic perspective, these two populations are able to provide an identifiable group of anti-racism educators.

A snowball or chain sampling technique was utilized. Patton (1990) notes that in this approach, "the process begins by asking well-situated people" for the names of individuals who are expert on this topic. Patton continues:

> [T]he snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information rich cases. In most programs or systems, a few key names or incidents are mentioned repeatedly. Those people or events recommended as valuable by a number of different informants take on special importance. (p. 176)

Once a list of names was gathered, a representative matrix was developed. In addition to the educational setting/workplace setting contrast, the matrix was designed to maximize representation across gender and geography. Further, this assisted in exploring common themes and differences in the data. Included in the categories are gender, geography, age, sexual orientation, and ability.

Potential sources of participants included anti-racist educational organizations, scholars and researchers in the field of whiteness, and teachers or trainers engaged in locating and interrupting the effects of whiteness. For example, one source for participants is the Center for White American Culture based in New Jersey. This organization has sponsored several national conferences on whiteness, and they engage in on-going teaching, research and consulting. Researchers and scholars in the field of critical white studies are another source for participants; many of these researchers either engage in educational efforts directly or may be able to identify individuals who are directly engaged. The criteria for participation in this study includes:

Individuals who have an understanding of whiteness, either from their research or their work experience,

Individuals who explicitly engage in social justice education in order to advance a social justice agenda, and/or

Individuals who explore whiteness as a concept, theory or system in their educational efforts.

As potential participants were identified for the study, I communicated with them directly regarding the purpose and value of the study, the data collection and reporting procedures, and determined their interest in participating. In addition, I explicitly discussed the value and benefit of this research to the participant. The potential value to the participant includes information regarding the outcomes of this research that they might use in their work; in addition, a copy of their interview transcript and a summary of the dissertation were provided if requested. After confirming their interest in participating, arrangements were made for the first interview, and an informed consent

letter sent. A sample of this informed consent letter is included in the appendices of this study. I interviewed 12 individuals in order to compare themes across the representation matrix and substantively address the research questions. The following are characteristics of the 12 participants:

Gender – 8 women; 4 men; no transgendered educators

Geography – 6 from the Northeast; 3 from the Mid-Atlantic; 1 from the South; 1 from the Mid-West; and 1 from the West.

Age – 4 are in their 30s; 3 are in their 40s; and 5 are in their 50s.

Two are differently abled, but not in reference to physical mobility.

Two identify as lesbian or bisexual; the remaining 10 identify as heterosexual.

Career – 3 are whiteness studies scholars; 4 are faculty members in a college or university environment; and 5 are organization development consultants.

Six have published at least one book on racism and whiteness.

In preparation for these 12 interviews, I engaged in a small pilot study and interviewed 3 individuals. The pilot study was intended to assist in my on-going process of developing a focused list of "essential and necessary" questions (Patton, 1990). The data from those interviews are not included in this study.

Data Collection

Following phenomenological research methodology (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988) I went through a series of steps including: bracket (epoche) my own preconceived ideas about the phenomena; conduct research by asking participants to describe their lived experience; and collect the data through an interview

process. Patton (1990) notes that epoche is a process to remove or at least become aware of prejudices, viewpoints or assumptions regarding the phenomena being investigated. It is an on-going analytical process rather than a single fixed event. During this process, I continued to bracket my thinking and evolving understanding of the topic.

Interviews were conducted with a predetermined set of 12 participants, and one formal interview was conducted with each participant. Interviews lasted between 70 and 90 minutes given the questions identified on the interview guide. Interviews were completed face-to-face wherever possible. In those cases where significant travel costs precluded a face-to-face interview, interviews were conducted by phone. Eight interviews were done face-to-face, and the remaining four were done via phone. Follow-up interviews were also conducted in three instances, once the original transcripts are analyzed, so that additional elaboration on a point could be included to fully develop a category. These follow-up interviews were all done via the telephone; audiotapes were used to record those interviews as well. Interviews utilized an interview guide that consisted of a set of question to be explored during the interview. An interview guide was used in this research so that I had some latitude in probing further on a particular point or exploring related ideas and themes. A copy of the interview guide is located in the appendix of this study.

Data Management and Analysis

Full transcripts were made of each interview and the follow-up interview, if one was required. I read each transcript not less than four times, and twice listened to the audio recording while I read the transcript. Data analysis followed general procedural

issues identified in Creswell (1998) and Patton (1990). Once my own experience had been bracketed, the data was read and initial codes were formed. The data were then "horizontalized." Patton (1990) notes that horizontalization is a process whereby data are examined and the researcher lists statements of meaning for individuals; moreover, all elements, perspectives and voices have equal weight. The data are then organized into meaningful clusters. Finally, the meaning clusters are linked together to make a general description of how whiteness is understood and addressed.

According to Creswell (1998), once the data has been analyzed, the researcher then constructs an overall description of the meaning and essence of the experience. A description of my own experience was constructed along with a description for each participant. Finally, a "composite" description was constructed. This description includes both a textural description of what was experienced as well as a structural description of how it was experienced (Creswell, 1998).

Following Creswell's (1998) outline for data management, data has been stored and handled utilizing a series of basic principles. Data has been replicated using a back-up computer files. High-quality tapes were utilized for audio recording. The names of participants are masked in the data. HyperResearch OSX, a form of qualitative data analysis software, was used in the horizontalization and clustering steps of the analysis process, and a data collection matrix was used as a visual means of locating and identifying information for the study.

Researcher Assumptions and Perspectives

The nature of the topic that I wish to explore is intensely personal for me. In some measure, it is an extension of who I am and what is important to me. The proposed research project is born of my reflection on my personal struggles and successes in being a white social justice educator engaged in anti-racism education. I am particularly excited about this topic because it combines two of my interest areas: whiteness and social justice education. The focus of the research is an intersection between these two areas, and my work in each of these areas has informed how I view myself as an educator and researcher.

It was a challenge to bracket my own evolving understanding of this issue. As a social justice educator, I am a part of the very system I wish to analyze. Similar to my comprehensive exam, I was challenged by doubts. How do I write about something I never learned how to really talk about? How do I know what I do not know that I know? How do I overcome my fear of writing about something I do not completely understand? What if my writing about racism and whiteness is an attempt to indulge in what Susan Stanford Friedman (Fine et al., 1997) calls a narrative of guilt, accusation, or denial? The desire to remain silent is palpable, and yet, I know that it is this very silence that keeps whiteness in place.

Using Peshkin's (1988) framework for exploring my motives, assumptions and expectations, I have identified four "I's": the social justice "I," the self-reflective "I," the student "I," and the ego "I." The social justice "I" is concerned about how individuals, cultural norms, and institutional policies, processes, and procedures reinforce a one-up/one-down relationship for different groups based on their social identity. In the United

States, white people are agents in this configuration when it comes to race. Secondly, the self-reflective "I" is concerned about my evolving sense of self, my personal growth, and how my social identity operates in shaping my values, norms, interests, self-concept, and world-view. When it comes to deconstructing whiteness, I am unsure of where the white researcher "fits into" this research. Being a white man that is engaged in this kind of research raises a series of potential issues. The student "I" is concerned about completing this dissertation in a timely, effective, and thoughtful manner. Finally, the ego "I" is implicit in the other three, but I want to acknowledge it by itself. Since this topic does have significance and meaning to me, and because I am a doctoral student wanting to complete this dissertation, I need to work on being humble, careful, thoughtful, and curious. My ego pushes me to act, lead, be competent, and defend my sense of self. It interacts with my self-reflective "I," and in particular, my social identity as a white man. Thus, I needed to consider my ego as I go about doing this research.

Trustworthiness

Creswell (1998) suggests that validity in a phenomenological research study refers to the notion that an idea is well grounded and well supported. Polkinghorne (1989) asks, "Does the general structural description provide an accurate portrait of the common features and structural connections that are manifest in the examples collected?" (p. 57). More specifically, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that criteria for trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following methods will be utilized to insure trustworthiness. In reference to credibility, two strategies that Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest are peer debriefing and member checking. Through this process, I debriefed the methodology, the data, and

analysis with a colleague from the Social Justice Education program. Further, I involved three colleagues of color to provide a counterpoint to my research. I asked that they read the findings and discussion chapters to offer their insights and perspectives. Their thoughts and perspectives informed my analysis and conclusions. The purpose of including their perspectives in this research study was to provide a counterpoint and context to my observations, to ensure that I was not participating in self-indulgent white fetishism, and as a mean of triangulating the data. Involving the three educators of color provided important comparison data in regard to how whiteness is seen, understood, and experienced, and how educators interrupt whiteness in their practice. The insight all of these colleagues was invaluable to this process.

In addition, participants had an opportunity to verify the data and its interpretation. In order to improve the analysis' transferability, the methodology is outlined and the data described within the dissertation. To establish dependability, a former colleague of the Social Justice Education program served as an auditor to insure that the process is applicable and consistent to the research undertaken. Finally, to insure confirmability, a record of the process, copies of all the taped interviews and transcriptions and notes from the interviews will be maintained.

Delimitations

The focus of this research will be on how white anti-racism educators understand whiteness and address this notion in their work. Questions related to the design and delivery of a workshop or other educational experience on whiteness will not be addressed. In addition, the facilitation of such a design or the effectiveness of the

experience in producing a change in the understanding of whiteness by learners will not be addressed. Although these are critical components of an effective pedagogy of whiteness, limiting this research to the primary question of understanding the role of whiteness in a white anti-racism educator's work will provide an opportunity to explore the answer in depth. Likewise, this research will focus specifically on anti-racism or social justice educators. Thus, educators within this parameter would include those individuals who explicitly engage learners in understanding the nature and content of whiteness in the context of racism.

Summary

This chapter is a review of the methodology for this study. This study follows a phenomenological approach to data collection and analysis to the research question, *from the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice?* This study involved the interviewing of 12 white educators from around the United States, all of whom are presently engaged in research, teaching, and consulting on issues of racism. Each interview was transcribed in full, and using HyperResearch, a qualitative research program, I coded each interview and developed meaningful clusters based on the codes. From those clusters, I developed an adapted "mind map" for each of the sub research questions using the codes and clusters.

Over the course of this research process, I have worked to "bracket" my thoughts and perceptions of the process and my unfolding discovery. Understanding my own assumptions, thoughts, and potential biases was an important component in the overall methodology and research design. I return to some of these bracketed "thoughts" in

Chapter 5. In the following chapter, I detail my findings from the interviews. It is the composite synthesis of the 12 interview subjects, and the presentation of these results follows the four sub-questions.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings for this research project are based primarily on the data from 12 white anti-racism educators. These educators gave their time to this study, and I conducted audiotape interviews with each of them over an 18-month period of time beginning in the Fall of 2003. Nine of them were conducted in the Fall of 2003 with the remainder conducted in the Spring of 2005. Contextual information included in these findings also comes from many informal interviews and conversations with colleagues that extend well before that period. The impact of my experience in the Social Justice Education program provides important context for the analysis that follows. In addition, reading, reflection, and participation in a variety of anti-racism events contribute to these findings. Further, conversations with three "critical friends of color" and a colleague from the Social Justice Education Program whom I asked to serve as an auditor to this process also influenced the shape of these findings. Most recently, my work with diversity issues in various corporate environments lend additional context to these findings.

This study examines how anti-racism educators come to this work, how they think and describe their practice, and how they think about whiteness in their work. These research questions derive partially from a review of the literature that explored background research on the motivation of white people in engaged in anti-racism education, the theoretical foundations of whiteness, and current strategies and issues in anti-racism education. This literature review provided a framework for the development of the research questions and subsequent analysis included in this chapter. The review

suggests that white anti-racism educators come to this work in a variety of ways as no similar path was identified for people engaged in this work. Some were "born into it" while others fell into this work somewhat serendipitously. Likewise, white anti-racism educators participate in various strategies in their practice, from a clear "social justice orientation" to a "diversity management" orientation. These larger issues, born from the literature review, were significant and instructive. As a result, this research project ended up focusing on those educators and consultants engaged in a critical social justice anti-racist pedagogy, their paths to this work, and the similarities and differences between those educators in terms of their approach(es) to teaching whiteness.

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first section briefly introduces the reader to the participants of this research project. I have tried to represent each of these individuals through a short telling of their "story" – reconstructing the material of their interviews after sorting it during the analysis phase of this project. Following the four sub-research questions, the interviews focused on four key points in understanding what whiteness is from the perspective of a white anti-racist educator and how it informs their practice. Those four points are the anti-racist educators early journey, how they describe their teaching and approach to this work, how they define whiteness, and how they believe their understanding of whiteness has influenced their teaching. Thus, the next four sections of this Chapter following the introduction to the participants are the themes that emerge from the four sub-research questions. The themes I present within each section are the most prevailing or patterns of responses identified through the interviews.

The second section addresses the first research question, *"How do white anti-racism educators describe their interest in anti-racism and journey as white educators?"*

This section is presented in four theme clusters: (1) early events that precipitate the awareness of racism; (2) critical events in the development of a white anti-racist identity or self-concept; (3) the call to anti-racism work and one's self-interest in doing this work; and (4) current expressions of their current anti-racism work.

In the third section of these findings, I present four theme clusters that address the second research question, *"How do white anti-racism educators describe their teaching and their approach to their work."* These theme clusters are: (1) the goals or learning outcomes of their teaching; (2) the content that is often included to address those goals; (3) the way in which educators support the learning process; and (4) how these educators describe their style and what is important to them in terms of how they interact with participants or students.

In the fourth section of these findings, I examine the ways in which these *white anti-racism educators describe the meaning of whiteness and the underlying themes that account for these views.* These educators described the meaning of whiteness as consisting primarily of four components: (1) whiteness as ideology; (2) whiteness as white culture; (3) whiteness as power; and (4) whiteness as privilege. Within each theme cluster, I present some of the issues these anti-racism educators offered as subtext for why they believe whiteness is about ideology, culture, power, and/or privilege.

In the fifth and final section of these findings, I identify four themes that *precipitate feelings and thoughts about teaching whiteness for these white educators, and how* these themes have *influenced their teaching.* These themes include: (1) ambivalence about the difference between whiteness and racism, and how much attention should be given to whiteness; (2) being uncertain about the future of racial justice but remaining

hopeful about continuing change; (3) managing one's anxiety and feelings of competence through having a sense of humility and self-awareness; and (4) being understanding and having a sense of compassion for others on the journey. Within each theme, I identify how each of these themes impacts these educators' thoughts and feelings about the teaching process. A short summary concludes this chapter.

Introduction to the Participants

This section provides the reader with a short introduction to the 12 participants. In each introduction, I share how I came to know the person and the manner in which the initial interview was conducted. I provide a little context about how they came to the work and why it is important to them. And finally, where possible, I share information on their current work dealing with whiteness in anti-racism education.

Tim

I discovered Tim while I was doing research on the internet several years ago. I was exploring what information and resources were out on the web regarding racism and white people, and Tim's organization came up in the search process. His organization maintains a very usable and robust web site on the role of white people in anti-racism work. Not long after that I attended a conference on whiteness in Massachusetts, and Tim's organization was a sponsor of that conference. Tim has also written a number of articles on white people and racism, and I decided that he was someone that I would want to speak with, given his experience. I met Tim one morning at his house in the mid-Atlantic area. We sat at his breakfast table, dog in the back yard, and discussed his experience in anti-racism training and his thinking about whiteness.

Tim grew up Quaker, and the role of Quaker values set the context for his thinking about social justice and action. When he went to graduate school, he lived in a Quaker house and dated one of his fellow residents, an African American woman, who he subsequently fell in love with and eventually married. Before co-founding the organization that he now runs full time, Tim had worked in a minority-owned social work practice. Tim's experience of being surrounded by people of color at home and at work, a situation where he was usually the only white man, gave him a lot of information about what it meant to be a person of color in the United States. It was in this context that he began to wonder what it meant to be a white person in the United States. This was a precipitating experience in his focusing on white people in the United States. Through the encouragement of his wife, Tim started an organization focused on white people, and he now directs the efforts of this organization full-time.

Tim released a book not long ago that examines whiteness in the United States. Tim indicated that there are two important things white people must do in order to understand whiteness; first, understand the hierarchical nature of race, and second, understand the cultural experience of being white. Those themes framed much of the interview as he spoke about relationships between white people and people of color, developing anti-racist training, and exploring the notion of "white culture." Tim is clear about the importance of understanding those two areas; the challenge, as he suggested, is in actually seeing it.

Shelly

Shelly is someone I met through my work at the University of Massachusetts, and she is a transplant to the New England area from the South. An articulate woman with an

easy sense of humor and a deep commitment to anti-racism work, we met in her home and talked about her work and teaching experience. After pouring us both ice-tea, we sat down at her dining room table to discuss her thoughts on the teaching of whiteness, something that she has been thinking and writing about for some time. Shelly was my first interview, and she was gracious as I tried to frame questions and manipulate the technology of my low-tech audio-recorder.

Shelly's most recent work experience prior to moving to New England was as an educator on diversity issues at a large university. Shelly describes her work with students as coming from a prejudice reduction model, rather than engaging them from a critical social justice perspective. Shelly did not feel that she had a lot of latitude to engage students in discussions of racism and whiteness, and the more she learned about the history and legacy of racism in the United States, the less she was able to feel comfortable teaching at this university. This dissonance between what she felt was important and what she had control and influence over led her to leave the university and move to New England.

Like Tim, Shelly has a biracial child and on some level, she believes that she has to be engaged in this work because she is accountable to her family for perpetuating or intervening in racial injustice. For her, anti-racism education is her "life's passion" and it has led her to examine how she is situated in the racial hierarchy and the role whiteness has played in situating her in that hierarchy. Shelly explains that she had a middle class upbringing, largely as a result of her father being able to take advantage of the GI Bill – a form of affirmative action for white people. Her understanding of these dynamics and the

complexity of whiteness have pushed her to think of new ways of engaging students in this material.

Brad

Brad is a diversity consultant and lives in the mid-Atlantic area. A mentor of mine had referred me to him, and I went to a conference for diversity consultants in order to meet up with him. After chatting for a while, we agreed to meet at his house outside of Washington, DC for the interview. We sat at his breakfast table with his dog near our feet as we talked about his call to this work, the role of anti-racism education in corporations and the challenges of supporting white people in acknowledging whiteness. Brad was open and self-disclosed information about how he came to this work and the meaning of this work in his life. His passion for the work and his sense of how critical the work is in his life was apparent as he shared stories about family, early mentors, and personal struggles he has faced in his life.

Brad had been an internal organization development consultant in a federal government agency before he became a full time external diversity consultant. While Brad indicated that he is not certain why he felt that racial and social justice was important for him to work on, he shared that it is an important value that he holds. Indeed, he indicated that any work that he engages in now has to principally be about social justice and inclusion in corporations or he does not want to be involved. Brad has been involved with two large diversity consulting firms and is working on a program for diversity practitioners who do work in organizations. As he talked about this new program, he was clearly excited and offered that it was based on a social justice

framework, not unlike the lens that the Social Justice Education Program uses in looking at oppression.

In speaking of whiteness, Brad believes that the most effective strategy for helping other white people understand it and their relationship to it is to examine it at the individual level of construction. This includes components of white culture, such as dress, as well as white privilege, and violence. The way to raise these issues, Brad feels, is through a relationship based on trust. In this manner, white people can be both challenged and supported to "stay in the complexity" that comes from understanding these issues.

Jackie

Jackie lives in New England. A faculty member at a small, private liberal arts college, she has also been involved with professional multicultural associations and consultants to other educators on creating inclusive pedagogy. I have known Jackie for a number of years, and knew that she was involved in teaching a course on whiteness. So, it was that we met at her office on campus, and talked about how she came to this work, her course, and her evolving understanding about how to teach these issues.

Jackie had been involved in social justice issues for a number of years before she started to teach a course on whiteness. Most of that time, however, was invested in advocating and educating on issues of ableism, sexism, and heterosexism. Addressing racism was something that she came too much later in her exploration of oppression. She had taken a workshop on racism early on, and it did not "go very well." The charged racial dynamics of this workshop led her to be somewhat afraid of engaging in issues of race and racism in any direct way. Although her work focuses primarily on racism, old

fears still emerge from time to time; Jackie now believes that this is natural and that those moments are often instructive for her.

One of themes that surfaced in my interview with Jackie that was emblematic of other interviews, was the role of spirituality and community in bringing focus and clarity to Jackie's anti-racism work. For Jackie, being involved in work for social justice is essential to living a life that is honest, connected, and meaningful. And by virtue of that work, she feels connected to a larger community of people. For Jackie, having these relationships means that she is supported in her learning and is accountable to the common good.

Sandra

Several colleagues of mine suggested that I speak with Sandra, the director of an equity and diversity program at a large mid-Atlantic university and a co-author of a recent book on whiteness (one that I had coincidentally just read in my review of the available literature). Sandra was more than willing to participate in my dissertation project, and so I met her in her office at the university. I had quickly taken my bag to leave for this appointment and discovered, much to my dismay, that I had forgotten my audiocassette tapes. Sandra found a couple of older tapes in her office, and lent me those for her interview. Sitting across from her, I found her articulate and intelligent; she covered a lot of ground in a short amount of time and with minimal effort on my part.

Sandra graduated from the University of Massachusetts and has worked with college students since that time. She enjoys the intellectual environment of a college campus and believes that public education is an important democratizing force and tool for social change. However, that role has yet to be fully realized: Sandra is currently

engaged in research on how schools are a breeding ground for prisons, particularly for young black men. She works with faculty, staff, and students on understanding diversity and justice, and co-teaches several courses aimed at creating opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and the development of authentic cross-cultural relationships.

One of the primary ways in which whiteness can be understood and opposed is by cross-race relationships. Sandra shared a story wherein she had spoken at a conference about the need for white people to commit to addressing racism, and a person of color asked her why she was not speaking with people of color about this. The person of color indicated that many people of color in his area have a hard time trusting white people, and that it would be important for them to know that there are white people who are working in an anti-racist capacity. Initially Sandra rejected his perspective because she understood that it was important for white people to work with other white people on anti-racism issues, but has since come to appreciate the point he was trying to make about the important role of relationships and developing trust as a way of advancing the cause of social justice. On some level, Sandra's experience parallels some of what Brad shared as important in addressing whiteness.

David

At a national NAME conference, I met David. David is a professor at a mid-west university, and has done work on the issue of whiteness. David sees himself, first and foremost, as a white anti-racist activist. Post-secondary education provides a vehicle for him to get involved in various opportunities to engage in his activism. He was open to being interviewed for my research project, and I took the opportunity to include him. On a trip out to the Midwest to visit a friend, I arranged to meet David at his office and

interview him. A fan of "Smarties" candies, David had a couple while he talked about his teaching at the university, his research and consulting work, and the value of understanding whiteness in order to advance racial justice.

David had graduated from a university in the south with a doctorate; his dissertation was on the identity development of white male (multicultural) facilitators. For him, it was an exploration into understanding his own development as a white man engaged in social justice issues. Since that time, he has worked on several college campuses, the most recent one as an assistant professor in education. David is very involved in NAME and consults to several educational organizations on issues of diversity and social justice. He often volunteers time in public schools and shows up at meetings and rallies where issues of race are central.

David is keenly aware of the fact that he gets paid to be an anti-racist educator – an irony (a white person that gets paid to address racism – an issue that white people created) that is not lost on him. And, on some level, it troubles him. He knows that because of his privilege, he can "opt out." He views racism and whiteness as ostensibly the same thing. Therefore, vigilance in the face of whiteness is critical for racial justice. And as an anti-racist educator, it is important to identify and understand it.

Jane

Jane is a diversity consultant and a pioneer in working with white people on racism. From her earliest days as a college student, Jane has been involved in the fight for racial and social justice. I have followed her work from some distance for many years and found her, without really knowing her, a role model in my own social justice work. When I started "going public" with my dissertation topic, several people suggested that I try to

include her voice. I emailed Jane about my research project, and she was very willing to be involved. I interviewed her one afternoon via the phone and she shared with me her thoughts on white anti-racism education, organizational change, and the work for social justice.

Jane indicated that she is a product of the sixties and as a child of German Jews; Jane was introduced to social justice at an early age. She attended her first black-white encounter group when she was 19 years old. After graduating with her doctorate, Jane taught at a mid-west university for several years before engaging in corporate diversity consulting. Jane now works with a range of client organizations in supporting leaders to make change, something that she believes is necessary for broader racial justice.

Jane believes that much of how white people respond to racism is based out of their own fear of understanding their complicity and taking responsibility, and that this fear impacts their ability to form authentic relationships. Indeed, Jane believes that white people's inability to engage across differences makes them incompetent. Engaging in anti-racism work is a process of becoming more competent and effective in relationships. And whether it is for individuals or organizations, there is value in becoming more competent and effective in this regard.

Anderson

Anderson has been thinking, writing, and teaching on issues of oppression for several years. As I was preparing to interview white anti-racist educators, I came across a book that he and two colleagues of his recently published on the stories of white men challenging racism. Several colleagues had mentioned his name in passing, and so I followed up and called him. Anderson was quite willing to be interviewed for this

research project. Since he was in the process of moving to Germany, we had to conduct the interview when he was back in the States for a brief visit. I called him at his home from my office, and we talked about his anti-racism work and how he came to this work.

Anderson first came to think about the concept and practice of oppression through a feminist friend, something that Anderson believes is a familiar path for white men engaged in social justice work. He joined a pro-feminist men's organization, and later joined a multi-racial diversity consulting organization. As a member of this diversity consulting firm for the past 15 years, Anderson has worked with client organizations on anti-racism and other forms of oppression. As a consultant, he invests a lot of his time coaching white male senior managers on developing productive cross-relationships and interrupting whiteness in their organizations.

Through the mid-90s, Anderson believes he was in an "anti-straight, white male" phase, and he was confronted by a colleague to challenge and support white men from a place of really loving and appreciating them. Concurrently, he had become aware that he learned about oppression primarily from white women and people of color. So, Anderson began to interview other white male anti-racist teachers to try and learn from them. These interviews eventually became the book I referenced above. This notion of loving white people surfaced in several of my interviews with white anti-racism educators. For Anderson, coming from this place of "holding" the other person you are working with, creates a level of compassion and respect wherein change becomes possible.

Heloise

Heloise is a faculty member on the west coast, and a well-known author in the field of multicultural education. Many colleagues mentioned that Heloise would be

someone that could provide a useful perspective on my research topic. Heloise has written extensively on whiteness and has trained white educators on creating a more inclusive curriculum. As a white educator engaged in anti-racism training with other white educators, I felt like Heloise would indeed have a valuable perspective to add to this study. I was able to schedule a time to speak with her, and called her from my office to talk with her about her work and what she has learned about the nature of whiteness in her work.

Heloise started teaching on the west coast in an urban area and developing friends with people of color. Through these relationships, Heloise would often become engaged in discussions about institutional racism and learned about how racism manifested in schools, housing, government, and other institutions. Her experience as a white female educator in urban public schools made her interested in understanding more about how to create a multicultural curriculum. As she thought about how best to teach students, she began to think more about the role of teachers in that process.

Whiteness from Heloise's perspective is fundamentally about white privilege, and how the world gets defined for the benefit of white people. One of the most important strategies for supporting people in understanding whiteness is through role modeling and story-telling. Heloise often will offer a story from her own life to highlight the dynamics of racism and the way in which white people benefit from it. The other strategy Heloise thinks is important is to really listen to student or participants. Creating a multicultural curriculum or multicultural community requires listening at a deep level, and listening is the first step to understanding.

Diana

One of my participants suggested I interview Diana, a professor at a small university in the Northeast. Diana has been engaged in anti-racism teaching and training for a number of years, and currently teaches a course on whiteness. I had an opportunity to speak with Diana over the phone one afternoon. At times serious and at times light-hearted, Diana's passion for this work was consistently apparent throughout the interview. Diana shared that she would like to be more involved in anti-racism work, particularly from an activist approach, and that theme wound its way through the interview.

For Diana, growing up in the 1960s and being aware of the anti-war movement, and then becoming involved in feminist politics and coming out as a lesbian all contributed to her seeing and experiencing the dynamics of discrimination and oppression. When she first started teaching at a university, she taught an education course on social issues, and as she explored that literature a clear connection to how social injustice connected all of the various social issues became apparent. Diana has been teaching about social issues for close to 15 years, and has just been thinking through what it means for her to be a white person in the last several years. Diana says she finds herself learning, along with her students, what it means to be white in society.

Diana does not see herself as an anti-racist educator; it is an identifier she reserves for other people in this movement, like Becky Thompson. When I asked her about this, Diana indicated that she certainly sees herself as an educator who addresses racism and whiteness in her work, but she does not have an opportunity to be engaged in the kind of activism that would allow her to identify as an anti-racism educator. When students ask

her about racism, she directs them to other identified experts – even on her own campus. Diana believes that it is vitally important to be involved in the community in addressing whiteness, and it is these folks who are the real role models in the current movement.

Liz

Liz is someone that was referred to time and again throughout my interviews as a "god parent" of sorts in anti-racism work. Although we initially had some difficulty in determining a meeting time, when we finally did get a chance to talk via phone, we talked for close to two hours. It was a rich conversation, and it was clear that she had been interviewed many times before. I had sent my questions in advance of our conversation, so she also was prepared for how the conversation would flow, and I let her talk about her work and how she came to understand whiteness.

A faculty member and director of a research program at a small liberal arts college in New England, Liz has been involved in research and teaching for some time. She started out teaching English when she received her doctorate. She worked at the University of Denver for some time on developing inclusive curricula before moving to the east coast. Liz has written some seminal articles on whiteness and now consults to organizations in addition to teaching and researching.

Throughout our interview, Liz returned to the notion of white privilege as an aspect of understanding how whiteness manifests in the U.S., and she shared her own story of coming to understand white privilege in her own life. One of the important issues that Liz raised during the interview was the importance of each person to come to an understanding of whiteness, of white privilege, of racism on their own – rather than reading someone else's work or engaging in an activity that is about someone else's

experience of whiteness or racism. Liz feels strongly that much of the good work currently available on whiteness, privilege, and racism has been used in an uncritical way and that, ultimately, it does not support white people in taking stock of their own lives and take responsibility for making change.

Linda

Linda is a diversity consultant that I met through a professional association. A warm, friendly woman, she talks frankly and plainly. I had been hoping to interview her for this study. Given my experience of her in the association meetings, she comes across as organized, effective, and above all, deeply committed to inclusion. I met her one afternoon over lunch and discussed her journey in understanding racism and how whiteness impacts how she thinks about her work as a consultant.

Linda grew up in Texas where she was "pretty clueless about race." She moved to the mid-Atlantic area and joined a major corporation as a business manager. She was invited to participate in a T-group based diversity experience with a couple of outside consultants from NTL, and the experience was life transforming. She became aware of gender and race dynamics while she was also getting in touch with her own beliefs and feelings. After many years of intrapersonal work and diversity work, she started a diversity consulting business with several colleagues. She now engages in diversity consulting full time, and she finds deep meaning in the work when the work is intensive.

Linda expressed her feelings about this work and what she finds challenging or stimulating consistently throughout the interview. On some level, she was more emotive than some of the other interviews and more self-disclosing. She identified that in her experience white people need to find their own "self interest" in examining these issues,

and often the break-through comes when there is a precipitating emotional event. She believes that understanding the dynamics of racism helps one assess and understand other events and issues in one's life since power and prejudice operate constantly in various ways in relationships.

How White Anti-racism Educators Describe their Interest in Anti-racism and Journey as White Educators

Every white person who comes to this work does so in a highly conscious way (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). By this I mean that engaging in critical anti-racism requires an investment of time and energy; in a society built on whiteness, people are rewarded for keeping the status quo. There is a great deal of inertia to overcome, and so it is of interest to this researcher as to how white anti-racism educators began to understand whiteness and their role in addressing racism. This section of the findings explores the participants' journeys in becoming involved in anti-racism education, and does so within four theme clusters. First, I focus on the participants' early awareness of racism and the precipitating factors in their entry to thinking about these issues. This theme cluster is composed of several themes that focus on the participants' self-described factors that influenced their early thinking and understanding of racism. In the second theme cluster, I examine some of the critical events that these participants experienced in their development of anti-racist identity. Then, I describe how these participants understand their "calling" to this work, and what they identify as their self-interest in engaging in anti-racism education. The last theme cluster for this section is an exploration of the participants' current contexts for doing anti-racism education. Each theme cluster in this

section builds upon the one before it, yet they are also clearly differentiated themes in the interviews, and this will be examined more fully throughout this section.

Early Events that Precipitate the Awareness of Racism

When asked about participants' early awareness of social justice, several talked about the role of family and religious systems as being one central factor in their early understanding of racial dynamics. Another dynamic that came up for several participants was their connection to some form of oppression as a way of relating to the implications of racism, an "approximating experience" in O'Brien's (2001) language. Their experience of being a target of oppression created an opportunity to consider the implications of how racism may impact people of color. Several participants also mentioned the role of an anti-racism training or event as being significant to their awareness of racism. The most significant factor in participants' early awareness of racism is through their relationships with people of color. These four factors influenced participants early understanding and perceptions of racism, and ultimately, of whiteness. These four themes stand out within this theme cluster – they consistently emerge as participants reflect on their early awareness.

Influence of Family and Religion

The influence of family on racial identity is cited in numerous studies examining the development of racial identity. What is interesting in the responses of these anti-racism educators is the polar nature of their family's influence. For some of these educators, social justice issues were an explicit value that their parents held and so being

an anti-racist activist was part of the fabric of their lives. Conversely, other educators came from family experiences where family members engaged in on-going passive racism. In other words, some educators came from families where they were actively encouraged to think about anti-racism, and others were actively encouraged to value whiteness as the norm. A second aspect of the family experience is the strong connection of the family's anti-racism stance to religious or spiritual values. Several white anti-racism educators are able to trace their anti-racism values to their family's religious upbringing. And the third aspect of the family experience is participants' re-evaluation of their upbringing from a critical race conscious perspective. In understanding the dynamics of racism within their family context, they are able to more accurately locate their own position as white people in a racial hierarchy.

Jane begins her interview by locating her anti-racism roots in her family's history. She offers:

> My parents were German Jews who came out of the holocaust, so I think there was a whole growing up with values and experiences around oppression, coupled with living in New York City, going to a college that was pretty aware, and having experiences that really began to raise my own awareness.

The context for Jane is her being predisposed to consider issues of power and justice as critical to her family's survival and the need to be vigilant in the face of oppression. While Jane does not make direct mention of her family's involvement in anti-racism work, she does speak to growing up in New York City, where racial diversity is typically present in one's daily life.

In a similar manner, Sandra shares her family's history as the center point to her evolving understanding of racism and her role as a white person in confronting this

system of oppression. Sandra speaks of how she was raised and the influence of her parents on how she thought about people of color:

> So, the way I think about this is that it was part of how we were raised, at least that's the message that I take away, and that I can remember my mother going out of her way to really encourage certain messages to get through and discourage others, and to create intentional experiences for us to interact and have substantive interaction in relationships with people who were different from ourselves our whole lives.

At the same time, Sandra understands the irony and complexities of how people of color were a part of her growing up experience:

> We always had people of color in our life, and I think that while it's complicated to have a black person clean for you in terms of the class and race dynamics, I'm so thankful that we did because that meant that we had some kind of a relationship to somebody who was different than ourselves from the time that we were born, and we lived in relatively affluent, predominantly white neighborhoods, and yet my mother always, and in most other instances, went out of her way to make sure that we had interactions with people who were extremely well educated and also upper middle class who were people of color because I think her own bias was that she grew up fairly working class, and she was running from that, and so there was a real kind of social climber mentality to that, but I also think at the back of her mind was that she didn't want to reinforce the connection between race and poverty.

Sandra struggled to make sense of the power dynamics involved in having a housekeeper who was black, the messages she was sent by the external world, and the overt messages she received from her parents about racial justice. As Sandra reflects back on her upbringing, it is her experience of those contradictions that lend insight into her understanding of the complex dynamics of race relations in the United States and her role as a white person.

Sandra's upbringing also connects with Jane's upbringing in one other aspect. Both of them cite the role of religion and religious values as providing a framework for thinking about their commitment to social justice. For Jane, it was the particular history

of her parents as German Jews, and for Sandra, it was her parent's Baptist values. Sandra relates a story that illuminates this connection well:

> I wanted to say all the right things that were part of the trendy left wing committee, and so I was very cautious about accepting that these were things that my mother and father came to through their faith because...you know, my dad's father, my grandfather, started the Chevy Chase Baptist Church right near here in Chevy Chase, Maryland: and it's a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, still to this day, church. They have a Portuguese ministry, a Spanish ministry, and that's part of the legacy that he left. And, in the 1920s, during the depression he was asked to teach theology at Howard, and he taught for one year for free because they couldn't afford to pay anybody, and that year that he taught, he brought black students home with him for the holidays at Thanksgiving and Christmas and so my father, in 1929, shared a dinner table....at least this is how he tells the story, with African Americans who were students at Howard during the depression. Now, the question that I always ask is "what was that experience like for those students? Could they so no to the white minister who invited them? How comfortable were they? Was the experience really as terrific as my dad remembers it?" So, I was very critical of that, but I think now as I've gotten older, I'm willing to just kind of accept what my father got out of it influenced who I am today and so, even though I can appreciate that other people involved may have gotten something differently out of it, that doesn't really inform my experience, so I guess I'm trying to be more kind in this process, and less ideological about how I think about it.

Tim also notes in his interview the influence of his family's Quaker values on his awareness of social justice issues. Indeed, he now sees himself as a "placeholder" regarding racism in his meeting house:

> I guess my sanctuaries are my family and my faith community. With my faith community, my immediate...Quakers, our congregations are called meetings, and so we go to a meeting in Plainfield which is about 25 minutes from here, and I've worked with them some on issues of anti-racism, but it's kind of been very soft and low key over a long period of time.

The religious context for these three participants underscores the role of family and faith-based value systems as one potential component of how these white people came to understand the necessity for becoming involved in anti-racist activism.

While Jane, Sandra, and Tim all cite family and religious values as significant in their early awareness of racism and the need to engage in anti-racist activism, other

respondents noted the indifference, and in some cases, the overtly racist way in which family members considered racism and race relations in the United States. For example, David shares an experience he has with his father:

> One memory that stands out in my mind from when I was in first or second grade was I can remember being.... We had just moved to this neighborhood in Sterling. Virginia, and I can remember being out in front of our house in the street with my dad, and this father and son walked by with turbans, and I can remember my dad saying that they're in America and they shouldn't wear those in America, that they should adapt. Now, with my understanding and thinking back, that doesn't even make sense, those are a religious, not a national ... but even then at that age, I knew he was wrong. I didn't know why he was wrong, but I knew in my heart that he was wrong. And, just a lot of things like that happened, like I remember my dad telling racist jokes, and I knew he was wrong.

And even though David has these experiences, he notes that he was aware that his father's line of thinking contradicted his innate sense of justice. He comments:

> I think I was always empathetic and I think I was always fairly liberal-minded, which was strange also because my family is very conservative. But I never had a language for it, I never had a way of doing anything with it. I may not have known that there was anything to do with it, but I do remember from very early on in my life having a sense of justice and a sense of right and wrong around these kinds of issues that differed a lot.... I used to joke that I think there was some sort of genetic mutation when I was born because everyone in my family on both sides of my family are very, very conservative.

While David is committed to anti-racist education and activism, it is not because of his upbringing in the same way that Jane or Sandra came to understand racism. Indeed, it is despite (or in spite of) the influence of his parents that he comes to his awareness of whiteness. Diana's story also shares a similar thread to David; Diana speaks with compassion and clarity about her early upbringing:

> My mother is racist as they come, and my sisters... and I think of my mother's as lack of education and view of the world, living in a world in which she sees everybody needs to be American, i.e., white. Like on TV, she's like, "What happened to the Americans?" She doesn't see Puerto Ricans, black people, Asians, she doesn't see them as Americans. So, that's so typical, I mean, she's 89. Her world has changed dramatically while she's been living, and she doesn't quite

> know how to make sense of it. So, she makes these comments and we can't talk about that here, you know. I can't sit by and let her say that, so we tangle a little bit, but it never goes anywhere because she doesn't really get it, and she's not going to get it. So, when I look at from where I came and I say, "Well, I think you didn't come from there, you know!" My mother - I love her dearly, and she certainly provided for me, she instilled in me the need to get educated, even though she didn't have any education herself. So, I get a lot of things from her, my sense of organization, so on and so forth, those kinds of things, and decency. I mean, she's a good human being. So, there is that. But, I can't trace my progressive views on inequality back to my home.

For both David and Diana, other factors influenced their value system and their level of interest in whiteness, and it was not until later in their lives that they were encouraged to consider the role of whiteness in creating a racist society.

"Approximating Experiences"

Another one of the major themes in participants' early awareness of racism is the link that is made between racism and some form of oppression that the participant experiences because of a target identity. Several of the participants discussed their early understanding of racial oppression, and their role as white people as agents of that oppression, because of their own experience as a target with some other form of oppression and their reflection on the privileges that accrue to the agents of the oppression they experience. As was cited in the literature review above, experience with some form of oppression (sexism, ageism, heterosexism, etc.) is often noted as a reason why white people come to anti-racism work.

Jackie spoke convincingly of how her examination of the dynamics of heterosexism when she came out led to a fuller understanding of anti-Semitism, and eventually, of racism. She offers:

> I actually didn't come to my understanding about anti-Semitism or even claiming an identity as a Jew until after I had gone through this whole process of coming out, and then thought, "Oh, okay, so now I have some ways of thinking about it;

> now I get it" and then was willing to, you know it was so loaded that I wasn't even willing to look at it. And, so it's interesting that I came to my Jewish identity through coming out as a queer, that was a really interesting piece for me. And, I think that in the process of doing that, and just being in a human development program, and just naturally being challenged and pushed even when it was around issues of heterosexism, race, and class, and you know, having those conversations and being challenged and being pushed, and seeing the ways they kind of operated, hearing from people of color and the pain, and hearing from white people who were further along in their understanding and about their pain.

In this, Jackie begins to understand the flip side of oppression by her examining her experience as a target of heterosexism and anti-Semitism. In connecting to the experience of people of color through her own experience as a target, Jackie then explores her role as an agent in racism.

Sandra connects to the experience of people of color, in some limited way, by her understanding of how sexism limited her as a young person. Similar to Jackie, this "othering" experience provides the context to understand the dynamics of racism, and thus, the nature of whiteness as when she notes:

> In relationship to boys, I was always kind of a tomboy at a time when that wasn't really truly quite accepted yet, and the experiences that I had with boys who I thought were my friends were sexually aggressive in nature when I was very young, and so on some kind of intuitive level that made me understand that I was other, both of those experiences, at four and at five. And so that experience of "otherness" I think started some kind of a consciousness raising process from the time that I was very, very young.

As was noted in the previous section on the role of family, Sandra continued:

> So, it really made my gender and class consciousness connect, and it laid the groundwork I think for me then to build the race consciousness on top of that. But, I would also say that I was open to that particular analysis of the world because of what my parents had taught me.

Thus, Sandra connects the role of her parents in providing the context for thinking about racism with her own emerging experience of sexism as a young person. These early

experiences create a level of understanding and language to identify the dynamics of racism, and eventually, her role as a white person in that system.

Diana provides a different perspective of how oppression weaves through her life and impacts how she comes to understand racism with her experience of classism and heterosexism. In our conversation, Diana starts by naming the role of classism and the politics of her generation as supporting her race consciousness. She offers:

> I can certainly see the ways in which factory people work and work and work and never make it, it may come from that, but... so I can see the discrepancy in the land of the free and home of the brave and everybody's equal but some are more equal than others. So, there's that. I think in terms of the other pieces, growing up in the 60s during the anti-war movement, I guess taking on the government and saying you know, the government's not doing the right things, that's a whole different stand.

Then Diana continues by describing her experience with sexism and heterosexism, and that through her own political awareness, she begins to understand the connections with racism.

> I think because I live in a community that ... you know gay rights have been an issue for years and years; and the Gay Rights Movement then connecting with Civil Rights Movement, connecting with the Women's Movement. I mean, I think through that venue I certainly know more people who do anti-racism work than I probably would have known if I was not connected to any movement.

Diana adds in reference to her connections to racism:

> If I were to make a blueprint, I would certainly, or a map, I would certainly draw it that way. It's kind of a web, rather than a lot of arrows.

Diana's web extends from issues of class to sex to sexual orientation, and as the target of these forms of oppression, provides her the "conduit" to examine the flip side of that web: her role as a white person in the system of racism.

While the experience of oppression by some of the participants provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of social injustice and dominant/subordinate

relationships within that system, being a member of a target group does not necessarily mean that one understands the complexities of other forms of oppression, nor what it means to be an agent of another form of oppression, nor does it explain why someone would become an educator or activist in that other form of oppression. Something else happened for these participants, who understood their own experience as a target of oppression, to examine the "flip" side of being a target, and then to commit to being an anti-racist educator. Jackie provides a clue to this when she said,

> Having those conversations and being challenged and being pushed, and seeing the ways they kind of operated, hearing from people of color and the pain, and hearing from white people who were further along in their understanding and about their pain.

Jackie's "conversations" point to the two other themes in this section: the experience of being in an anti-racism training or similar event and/or having relationships with people of color.

Anti-racism Training

Participants' experience in an anti-racism training or similar educational event is another theme in their early awareness of racism. For many of the participants the anti-racism training provided theoretical concepts and tools to make sense of and provide language for understanding the dynamics of racism. On another level, the experience pushed them, as Jackie suggests, to engage in conversations about issues that they would not ordinarily participate. While many of the participants in this research project recalled participating in such experiences, only one of them indicated that it was perhaps because of these experiences that they decided to be anti-racism educators themselves.

David is the one participant who directly links his experience in an anti-racism training event or course to his desire to commit to anti-racism education. David offers:

> I think there were a lot of things throughout my life that put me in a position to be hooked. The moment that I can remember is that I took a multicultural education class. This was in my last semester as an undergraduate, and I had already known that I was going to work on a master's degree in education at that point. I had already been accepted into the program, sort of with a sociology of education focus. I was just taking one class in the education school to get my feet wet because I was starting there the next semester as a master's student. I was taking this multicultural education class that was basically challenging people to think reflectively about these issues, and I can just remember the third meeting of this class...the class met once a week...the third meeting of this class, I just remember thinking to myself this is what I'm gonna do.

As will be discussed below, David's experience is one factor that led his development of an anti-racist white identity, and eventually, his desire to be in this field. As this relates to his early awareness of racism, involvement with in an anti-racist educational experience was an important factor.

Jane also identifies her involvement with an anti-racism educational experience as an important factor in her increasing awareness of racism and the role that plays as a white person. Like David, she starts by discussing a pivotal experience that happened while in college:

> It started when I was 19 years old and student at Queens College. I was in my first black/white encounter group and that's really where I began learning about racism, learning about myself as a white person and feeling that responsibility.

Jane continues by citing a specific experience that led to her reflecting on her role as a white person:

> Probably the critical event I would say was when I went to a workshop sponsored by the National Council of Christians and Jews, which is in my book, and went to a workshop in which the staff got up and did what they called a "Panel of Americans,", and an African American woman got up and said, "I don't give a shit about white folks, if you all learn something, great, if you don't, who cares. I'm here for the people of color, the blacks and Puerto Ricans, and white people - just

> stay out of my neighborhood. Do your own work, don't bother me." And I was like totally offended and here I was this good white little girl from Queens, and this was in New Jersey, and it was 85% black and Puerto Rican participants. So, even though I had grown up in a very diverse environment...you know I had grown up around blacks and Puerto Ricans all my life, the difference in being in an environment where I was also not in the majority was also a very huge experience. And I was ready to get in my car and go home, then I thought, "No, I'll stay and hang out and deal with it." And, that was really where the concept of white awareness came in for me, which even though I'd been in black/white encounter groups, this was kind of the seminal point in my own learning around white people doing work with white people.

Jane's experience in this particular workshop led her to thinking about the complexity of whiteness, and what role white people have in addressing racism. Jane is initially offended by one of the panelists' remarks, and this struck an important chord for her. Even though she had grown up in an ethnically diverse environment, it was through the anti-racism training experience that it became clear that she had an important role to play as a white person in dealing with racism.

Jackie, who now teaches a course on whiteness where she is a faculty member, started becoming more aware of her role as a white person when she took one of her graduate program's educational workshops. She notes:

> I think they're [her experiences] all interconnected and that first entry in, that first class, one of the first weekend workshops was on race, I think I did racism and sexism, I can't remember, but it's possible that I did racism. I know one of them was racism because I know who the facilitators were, and how bad it was in some ways was that first workshop, it's a surprise I ever went back. But, I now love and adore those people so it's fine. But, that was kind of my first entryway in, and it really was in some ways a real awakening because of my absolute obliviousness to thinking about race, and it wasn't as though I didn't understand kind of race politics in some way, or that there was racism in the world and on a very kind of abstract and conceptual level, but not necessarily thinking about my own race, or thinking about racism as something that impacted me because I was white. So, that kind of was the first entryway in.

Similar to Jane's experience where the training created a crucible in which racial dynamics rattled the white participants' sense of white invisibility and instead put them

"on the spot," Jackie experienced a workshop that was highly emotionally charged (from her perspective) and was unsure if she wanted to continue. In both the case of Jane and Jackie, however, they persisted through their initial reaction to these educational events and discovered the significance of whiteness in perpetuating racism.

Linda's early awareness of racism and whiteness also started through an anti-racism educational experience. Where many of the participants had a brief encounter during college, Linda had a pivotal experience in the workplace and it started the process of changing her worldview. Linda relates the story of being invited to a diversity workshop that focused on issues of racism and sexism and her reaction to this initial experience:

> I had a mentor who came to me one day in the cafeteria and said, "Linda, will you go to a Diversity Workshop with me?" And I said, "What's a Diversity Workshop?" and he said, "I don't know, but we gotta have women, will you go?" And, I really liked this guy, and like I said, he was a mentor, so I said, "Fine." I knew nothing about what we were going to do. It turned out that....well at DuPont, it was a core group. Do you know core groups from Digital Equipment? Well, we were DuPont's first core group, so we were half men, half women, half black, half white, and our task – at least one day a month for two years – was to do nothing but talk about issues of race and gender.

What is powerful about Linda's experience is that, even as she went through that workplace experience, she was aware that these issues were about core self – how she was in the world – and that she was both a target of oppression as well as an agent all at the same time. She continues:

> I got to the diversity work as a very unhappy person, I mean, my 20s and early 30s were really awful times. I was so mad, from a really psychological perspective, I was a very angry person in a very polite body, and had no idea that all of this was going to play out when I [got] to the core group. When we were doing the race and gender work, I started to learn things that put the system in perspective and that was incredibly helpful because I learned it wasn't just me. As we had the conversations, and the one up/one down power dynamics came out, and they taught us the race and power continuum and all that and the gender and

> power continuum so there was theoretical context. But there was a lot of conversation, a lot of challenging back and forth.

Linda had the experience of learning about herself at a fundamental level, and it is within that context that she explored the dynamics of racism as well. Linda was able to do this over an extended period of time with a fairly intact group; this created a safe container for their to be "challenging back and forth," and as a result, she was able to make sense of her anger as well as be equipped with the tools to transfer that understanding to other forms of oppression.

Tim, during our conversation, talked about the value of anti-racism training in heightening people's awareness. Tim shared:

> There's certainly a learning process for white people. I wanted to add as far as things that bring white people to anti-racism, I think the impact of training is really, may have been underestimated. I find so many people, for instance, who have been trained by the Peoples Institute and it just comes out all the time. They've of course been working on it for 20 some years and say they've trained like 60 or 1000 people, I'm not sure what the current count is, so they've been out there for a very long time. And, I hear stories of people in other anti-racism training settings and these settings provide the structure and tools for having these kinds of conversations and after seeing Kathleen's analysis of mixed race friendships, I was saying to myself, well where *do* people learn about this from? I think that's really a major source, and there's a lot to be said for it. The question is what do you do after you leave the training? You know, if 30 or 40 people go to a training, maybe one of them comes out with a sense of commitment that carries them through several years, and they have to be able to hook up to other people and other structures and processes to kind of sustain them.

While most of this study's participants were profoundly influenced by factors other than an anti-racism training or education event, Tim asks an important question regarding the several participants who do recall being influenced by training: how did training foster a sense of commitment, and what else has been required to sustain them? Jackie and Linda both came away with a heightened sense about how racism operates and the tools to

analyze the dynamics of racism. But the training, while it supported their early awareness of racism did not, in and of itself, facilitate this commitment for either of them.

Cross-Race Relationships

Tim, in the quote above, also refers to some current research being done on the dynamics of cross-race relationships; this research suggests that in many cross-race relationships, racism is rarely discussed:

> Kathleen Corrigan, just did a book. She studied 40 pairs, black/white pairs of friends, where each person independently in the pair defined the relationship as a close one. She did interviews and content analysis, I actually read several of the transcripts and her finding is that they don't talk about race, and they don't. They are aware of race in general and even the white partner has some understanding that race disadvantages the person of color, or might do that. But, within the context of their relationship they really don't talk about their own racialized experiences, and this apparently is something that is also characteristic of cross-gender relationships or cross-class relationships. When there's a difference and it's hierarchical, in a matter of oppression and privilege, if you have a friendship across that boundary, you kind of avoid that topic. There are two couples in the sample where they were talking about this stuff and their relationships are going to hell.

Interestingly, in my interviews, subjects discussed how their relationships with people of color – where racism is explicitly discussed – helped facilitate greater commitment on the part of the white participants in engaging in anti-racism work. Participants in this study seem to have close relationships with people of color that is contextually different from what surfaces in Corrigan's research. As Heloise notes:

> I did go to a couple of workshops in which I felt like white people were really put on the spot, you know, sweating bullets sitting there, and I do remember that. But that wasn't the majority of my experience.

Instead, Heloise, like most of the participants cite their relationships with people of color as a vital factor in their examination of racism and their exploration of the role of white

people in that system. Tim's question, however, suggests that more than just having relationships with people of color impacts a white person's understanding of racism. Indeed, his question about the role and impact of training or some other educational event suggests that having the tools to understand racism can be an important component in fostering a sustained commitment to anti-racism. Perhaps that is why this study's participants mention a range of factors that contributed to their early awareness; it is not an either/or, but a both/and.

Several participants spoke about relationships with people of color early in their lives. People of color, as a part of a home or work-space, are a defining feature for some of those relationships. For example, in the section above, Sandra notes that one of her early relationships with a person of color was with her family's housekeeper who was African American. Tim also claimed a similar experience:

> Another earlier experience was that of having a black housekeeper for about two years. At various times, my mother had housekeepers and some were white, and we only had one who was black actually, but I was very fond of her, and she was very good to me, I guess. So that gave me an early personal relationship, and I've heard other white people talk about an early black woman caretaker being significant in their experiences, so I think that did have an impact.

There is an important subtext to these relationships, of course, which will be explored further in Chapter Five: how whiteness impacts white people's views of their relationships with people of color. In these instances, they mirror Tim's comment above that the power difference is often not addressed within the relationship.

Participants' parents or teachers often structured some of the early relationships. For example, Sandra offers that:

> [my mother] she went out of her way to make sure that we interacted with the most well educated and most financially successful people of color through our church, or the community association; part of which was her own need to be

> among them, but part of it I think was also to not encourage us to make those connections, and also I think she didn't want us to ever have to experience what she feared, which for many years, I think many people in the family think she was elitist.

Sandra notes that her mother figures prominently in creating opportunities for her to have cross-race relationships in this recounting of her early childhood. In this example that Sandra offers, race and class dynamics heavily influence how those relationships are structured; however, Sandra positions this as an important early learning for her in terms of interrupting the regular flow of dominant messages regarding race relations.

David's early relationships with people of color are not purposefully structured by parents but are the product of friendships developed at school. David recounts a story in which he comes to understand that his worldview is different from his friend. David recalls:

> I had this friend Aaron...I'm still friends with him actually. In first grade we were on the same soccer team, and we were in the same class, and we became pretty good friends at that point. A little bit later, we became really close friends and stayed really close friends for a long time, and I can remember a situation in high school where he and I were walking through the hall, and I'm thinking at the time "this is the guy that I spend all my time with, we go eat together, we play sports together, we play video games together," you know, I'm thinking we're pretty similar. And, I just have no consciousness of the fact that he has this experience that I have no idea about, I don't see it, or I don't want to see it, I don't know. But, I can remember one day in the hallway at school, a group of other African American men coming up to him, and he and I are standing there, and they're challenging him on his blackness saying that because he hangs out with white folks that he's not really black. That's when I got some sense that there was something else going on here, that we weren't as alike as I thought, that he had this other part of his experience that he probably didn't even feel comfortable talking with me about because I was so ignorant about it. So that experience stands out in my mind.

David shares a powerful and interesting story regarding his early awareness of racism. For the purposes of this theme cluster, both of these events – in relationship with someone of color – had an important impact on David's understanding of racism and,

eventually, his role as a white person. On some level, David comes to understand that his friend has a different life experience, and moreover, that his friend probably had to deal with the psychological and emotional pain that comes from being a target of racism because of David's lack of understanding of that different life experience (and confronting his friend, Rob, for example). As will be discussed below, David's reflection on this early life experience is one of the triggers that move him to commit to anti-racism work in his life. In his recounting of this story, however, David's relationship with Aaron is not something structured by a family member or teacher, but is the outgrowth of a friendship that comes through casual contact. It is David's reflection on that experience, after he had been equipped to consider the implications of that event that supports his commitment to anti-racism.

Casual contact and the development of friendships describe how several participants began to become aware of racism, and later, of their role as white people in maintaining that system. Most of that contact came as a result of participants' interaction with people of color at work. Heloise, Anderson, and Jane all relate stories of their interaction with people of color in a work context, and that through those work relationships, started to examine how racism structured their friends' lives. Heloise, for example, shares the development of her awareness through a friendship group she establishes with other teachers. Those teachers take time to assist her in her understanding of racism:

> But during that time, I had started getting to know some African Americans, teachers mostly, and sort of had this friendship group, sort of mixed-race friendship group and people that I was hanging out with, and it then became over the next six or seven years, of living in Seattle and getting to know more and more African American adults, forming some pretty close relationships with some of them that I found myself in a lot of contexts in which African American people

> were talking about various elements of racism -- racism at work, racism in schools, racism in looking for housing, racism on getting hassled here and there.

Heloise underscores the casual nature of those discussions:

> But most of the time in a lot of these discussions it would be just sitting around the dinner table with mostly an African American group of people and just sitting and listening.

Her development comes from trusting relationships with people of color; sometimes the learning came as a result of being in a different environment:

> The majority of my experience was just gradually learning things and becoming aware of things in the context of people that I basically liked, basically trusted. And, I do remember that there were times when I felt totally out of place. I remember once going to one of my African American boyfriends, a friend of his got married, and going to the wedding and feeling like some of the African American women looking at me like "what are you doing with a black guy?" and just sort of feeling that.

And sometimes the learning came directly from one of her friends:

> Well, in one of those connections somebody did actually sit down and say, "Listen, let me tell you about this." It wasn't more "let me tell you about racism", it was more just like "let me tell you how the housing market works" or "let me tell you how the tracking system works."

Heloise's experience with people of color is through casual work relationships. The people of color do educate Heloise on their experience of racism, although their educational role is an informal one. Unlike David who comes to understand racism through reflection on prior experience, Heloise comes to understand the dynamics of racism through the sharing that takes place in her relationships with people of color that she trusts.

Trust also figures into Anderson's story of how he came to think about issues of racism as well but in a different context; in this case, an African American woman enjoins Anderson to teach a class and rather than teach Anderson directly about racism,

like Heloise's friends do with her, trusts Anderson to figure out how to make the connection between what he knows about oppression and the system of racism that he does not really understand. Anderson explains:

> I was aware that I was in predominantly white groups. We were probably talking about the need to make those groups racially diverse, but maybe in a kind of naïve way, saying, "Well, why aren't they coming?" whoever the color was. And, it wasn't until maybe '87 or '88 when an African American woman who didn't know me that well but had heard about my work around sexism and homophobia.....oh, and I should say I've been doing training and consulting around sexism in particular, and then eventually homophobia, since about 1978 is when I formally started doing that. So, about ten years later, in about 1988, this African American woman asked me to teach a class at BU School of Social Work on the implication of racism for social work practice. I said to her, "I can't do that, I don't know anything about racism." She said, "You know about the dynamics of oppression." I said, "Yeah, but I don't know anything about racism." She says, "You'll get it."And she knew enough about me and trusted me that eventually I said, "Yeah."

It is similar to David's experience in that Anderson uses the analytical tools he has acquired in other contexts to examine racism. Anderson does this by reflecting upon his prior experience and by doing some personal research into the histories of peoples of color. While Anderson's experience in gaining an awareness of racism is indirect through reading the stories and histories of people of color, other participants apply the analytical tools they acquired in other contexts to their relationships with people of color.

Jane, in a process similar to Heloise's, provides an example of how she learned about racism through her relationships:

> The other thing I learned in Oklahoma, obviously, I had never been exposed to Chicanos, to never been exposed to Native Americans, so it broadened my experience of people of color very profoundly because most of my experiences on the east coast have been black and Puerto Rican. So, I think the other thing I learned was just a deeper understanding of the issue of oppression in a very profound way, which was really a blessing. And seeing how it occurred in Oklahoma, which was so different than the Northeast. So, I learned a lot about that.

Jane had acquired an understanding about the dynamics of racism and her role as a white person is perpetuating or intervening in that system. When she moves to the mid-west, she discovers an opportunity to use her early understanding and analytical tools to obtain a deeper, and more nuanced understanding of racism and of whiteness. Her relationships with people of color assist her in understanding many of these nuances.

Tim also discussed the role of relationships with people of color in his journey and the impact of those relationships on his early awareness of racism. In the case of Tim, he was surrounded with a lot of data points about what it means to be a person of color in the U.S., and by virtue of being surrounded by that information, he began to examine what it means to be white in the U.S. Tim notes that:

> I was working for a minority-owned social work practice, and we were doing diversity training as well as other lines of service, and I wear many hats in that case, and I have an MBA and also a Master's in Social Psychology, so I was kind of an office manager, and I'd do case work, and I'd help with the diversity workshops, and then I'm in an interracial marriage, and we've been married for 21 years, and we were together for several years before that, so that's a longstanding marriage, where I'm the white person and my spouse is African American.

Tim is the beneficiary of many points of information, not unlike David, Heloise, and others cited above. At another point in the interview, Tim notes that:

> Well, in my case, I would go to work, and I'd be the only white person there, often, though there were other white staff, part-time staff, who would be there. I certainly was the only white man, and then I'd come home, and I'd be the only white person, and the only white people I really ran into were just kind of incidental, on the street, and is was just those kind of contacts, and not only that, I was working in a very charged kind of situation in a way, very information-rich situation in that we had our diversity practice with a social work organization and at the same time my wife is a black feminist sociologist.

The participants in their early awareness of racism benefited by associating with people of color, but they were not yet quite active in understanding their role in whiteness and acting on that information. As will be explored further in the next theme cluster, these

participants began to shift their role from being the recipients of information about racism and the histories of people of color to being personally accountable as white people for their role in perpetuating whiteness. It is through that process that they became committed to being engaged in anti-racism education.

Liz offers an example of how this shift occurred. In this example, Liz has an understanding about the nature of racism and its impact on people of color. It becomes apparent to Liz that white people, too, have a role in perpetuating racism, and that she benefits from it. She offers:

> I had access to the knowledge system in a way that my African American friends in this building didn't have. I had heard their story, pictures of the black women in this building, I had heard some of their stories and had some times felt when they were stories of discrimination, I sometimes felt "how awful for them," but I never felt how exempt for me, the reverse. That my ease was the compliment of their dis-ease. It corresponded to their dis-ease, and the two were interrelated. I would hear, for example, of the bad treatment from the cops that they suffered, including in my town, but never….that that meant that I was being over-protected by the cops or over served by the law and order system.

On some level, these participants experienced a "tipping point" – a point at which their early awareness of racism tipped into a greater awareness of their role in whiteness and a commitment to be actively engaged as an educator in these issues.

Critical Events in the Development of a White Anti-racist Identity

The focus of this theme cluster is on the range of events or incidents that led these participants, who had some understanding of racism, to commit to becoming an anti-racist educator. While this is not an exploration of white identity development per se, the themes in this cluster suggest a clear movement from awareness to commitment. If, as Tim notes above, few people who leave an anti-racism training become committed to and

engaged in the movement for racial justice as their life's work, how do these participants describe the factors that supported the development of their identity as a white anti-racist educator? What is interesting about the interviews, and what I suggest below, is that instead of specific events or incidents, there are instead three overlapping and mutually reinforcing dynamics that led these participants to commit to becoming an anti-racism educator.

Through the participant interviews, three primary themes emerge in relation to these white people committing to anti-racism education work. A majority of the participants speak of being involved or wanting to be more involved in social activism, and this strong desire to support positive change and social justice is coupled with a social context wherein those basic desires are supported and nurtured. For most of these participants, strong social relationships, such as close friendships, with people of color combine with a deeper intellectual understanding of the dynamics of racism. Personal reflection on the intersection of the emotional and intellectual forces creates a context in which these white people become personally committed to being actively engaged in anti-racism work. Thus, the three primary themes are not categories of events or incidents that led these white people to become anti-racist educators. Instead, the three themes are context categories: the emotional lessons learned from social relationships with people of color and other whites; the constructive intellectual lessons learned from social justice or multicultural education; and the personal habit of reflecting on the meaning and significance of these two sets of data (or lessons).

Relationships with People of Color

The emotional lessons learned from people of color about racism had a significant impact on almost all of the participants in this study. I noted the relationship between these white anti-racism educators and people of color in their early awareness of racism above; for many of these educators, however, their commitment to anti-racism stems from more than "awareness of racism" because of people of color. These white educators became engaged and committed to addressing racism because of the emotional connections they made with people of color in their lives. Some of these educators also speak about the white people in their lives that supported them in understanding the dynamics and complexity of whiteness and nurtured their commitment to anti-racism education. Whether it was people of color or white people that supported them in engaging in these issues, the role of trusting relationships that support the exploration and questioning of racism and their role as white people served as a mirror and safety net.

Heloise spoke most directly about the relationships she had, primarily with people of color, and their impact on her becoming involved and committed to addressing racism. Heloise shares that:

> The best way I can understand it is to say that as I was realizing that people that I liked and genuinely enjoyed being around were in many ways getting screwed by the system, and I got angry enough at the system that I just couldn't ignore it. That's the best way I know how to understand it.

Heloise notes that she became angry at a system that marginalizes people that she cares about. Heloise begins to understand that she cannot be passive in the face of injustice that her friends have to manage. Heloise continues by noting, "The majority of my experience was just gradually learning things and becoming aware of things in the context of people

that I basically liked, basically trusted." Trusting relationships, on some level, becomes an important hook for Heloise in committing to anti-racism work.

Anderson also shares his perspective on how people of color helped him become committed to engaging in anti-racism education. You will recall from an excerpt above that Anderson was asked to teach a class on racism in a social work program by a woman of color. This faculty member trusted Anderson to figure out how to teach this class, even though he had not taught a class specifically on race and racism before. Through his experience, he became aware of the history and dynamics of racism and his role as a white person in maintaining this system. Later in his interview, Anderson continued:

> So, I ended up,....that woman and I became colleagues and worked together a lot and within a year I had joined a consulting group founded by two African American women, the group is called Visions, and their primary work was and is still is dealing with racism and other forms of oppression as they arise. I became one of the consultants and was really doing that almost full time by about 1990.

In this passage, Anderson notes that he becomes committed to doing anti-racism education fairly quickly (within a year). Anderson has been teaching and organizing on issues of sexism and homophobia for years before he became engaged in teaching on issues of racism. Anderson had, at that point, a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of oppression but through his relationship with this woman of color, came to understand the history of racism and examine his role as a white man in addressing these issues. This understanding led him to join a consulting firm that was founded by two African-American women.

Other participants discussed learning about racism through their relationships with people of color and being supported in increasing their commitment to addressing issues of racism. Brad notes that he actively sought out those relationships with people of

color, and he began to engage in anti-racism education and consulting through his networking with these individuals. Brad explains:

> So, I applied and got accepted to NTL around 1985, and I started meeting a number of people who do diversity work and oppression work, social justice work. Bailey Jackson, Fred Miller, Judith Katz, Kathy Royal, and a number of others, and I just started showing up when there was a committee in NTL that had been going on for a long time with Bailey Jackson and others. I had been doing OD. I asked to be a member of the committee, and they kind of held me off for about a year and a half, and I just kept asking, and so I finally became a member of the committee, and it got disbanded as soon as I did! It was neat though that I got to meet them, and whenever there was a workshop or a lab that was being given at NTL that had anything to do with oppression work, or social justice work, I took it. So I started meeting and connecting up with people in NTL.

Brad was persistent in networking with people of color and sought out opportunities to become more involved in anti-racism work. The more he became involved, the more committed he became. As I will suggest below, Brad was persistent in seeking out these relationships because of his reflecting on his past and what he was learning about himself and other people.

Similar to Brad, Jane also notes the connections she made through her graduate program and their impact on her understanding racism and her commitment to social justice issues. She notes that:

> So that kind of started me on this path, and then when I got to UMass, because I went straight from undergrad to graduate school, I was really fortunate to be able to work with people like Eric Goldman who was working in Southwest, who is a South African man, who really started looking at white on white work, so Jerry Weinstein, Al Alschala, there were a group of people... Bobbie Daniels, I mean, there were African Americans and whites, who were all working around these issues. So, that deepened – Maurianne Adams really deepened my understanding of kind of a white on white approach.

For both Brad and Jane, their relationships with people of color and white people not only supported their continuing education on issues of racism but also served to keep them engaged and committed to organizing and engaging in these issues. Ultimately, this

environment – characterized by supportive and trusting relationships with white people and people of color – supported their commitment to on-going anti-racism education.

Social Justice and Multicultural Education

At the same time that these trusting relationships were being constructed, these white educators were also deeply engaged in understanding the dynamics of racism and of whiteness. Each of them experiences a significant learning curve as it relates to understanding racism. Jane is in a graduate program that focuses on social justice. Brad becomes actively involved in a professional association that supports its members in learning about diversity. Anderson learns through on-the-job training by becoming a consultant in an organization that directly deals with diversity in organizations. Intellectual curiosity or stimulation is a thread that runs through each of the interviews, much like Brad, Jane and Anderson, and participants' intellectual transformation constitutes a paradigm shift on some level.

Jane notes in an excerpt above that she attended an educational event and there was an activity called "Panel of Americans" and that during this panel discussion one of the women of color indicates that she is there for the people of color and that white people need not to bother her and do their own work. Jane is offended by this and considers going home, but instead she stays "to deal with it." This represents a mind shift for Jane as she rethinks her reaction to that event. She notes that "was really where the concept of white awareness came in for me, which even though I'd been in black/white encounter groups, this was kind of the seminal point in my own learning around white people doing work with white people." In her interview, Jane reveals that she came to

graduate school already thinking how to advance the idea of "white people doing work with white people." She notes that:

> I really sort of came with this as my agenda. So, I really after that experience. There were two things that were really important to me. One was I really got involved in the whole NTL type of training, sensitivity training, T-groups, experiential learning...that was one core thread of what I wanted to pursue. The second was clearly focused with the concept of race, and racism and dealing with social justice.

Through Jane's engaging with this material intellectually along with the supportive social networks cited above, Jane becomes committed to doing anti-racism education.

Jackie also indicates that her graduate program pushed her to consider racism and her thinking about social justice, within a nurturing social environment, supported her active commitment in anti-racism education.

> I went to graduate school to get a master's degree in special education and did get a master's degree in special education, because I wanted to, I had this kind of commitment to working with students with disabilities. Somehow I had this connection to disabilities and wanted to make a difference. While I was in graduate school, I took a social justice ed class. I took a weekend workshop, which completely and totally blew me out of the water. I was so not prepared for it. But, it was at that moment that it all kind of made sense to me...

Jackie takes a weekend workshop on racism that impacted her desire to continue learning and understanding. Jackie continues:

> I mean I eventually came around to it, but I don't know if that first workshop that I attended on racism had been different, I think in some ways that that workshop was so horrible that I was hooked in terms of thinking about "wow, there's something here that I need to pay attention to," but not this. It took me a long time to actually come back to the race and racism thing, and it was also present in all the classes. I mean how many painful moments in classes could you possibly not be affected by?

While Jackie initially rejects considering further exploration of racism and her role as a white person, the combination of continuing information on racism coupled with a social support network provides Jackie the foundation for returning to examine racism.

Anderson notes above that teaching the social work class and beginning to work for a diversity consulting firm founded by two African American women supported his engagement and commitment to anti-racism education. At the same time, Anderson also was actively learning about racism and whiteness on multiple fronts: through teaching, through consulting, and through reaching out to other whites. Anderson shares his experience doing research for a book on white men engaged in anti-racist activism:

> And, the other development that started happening is that I began to do the interviews that became the book, *White Men Challenging Racism*. That really came out of a desire to learn from other white men about how they constructed their lives around challenging racism, and what motivated and sustained them, and how they built relationships both with our own kind and other people as well. I'd say now what was wonderful about having done the book is I've really found 35 teachers, and maybe more in that book, of white male teachers, because I learned so much from these men I interviewed who ended up in the book.

Supported by his social network, Anderson engages in writing a book to satisfy his intellectual curiosity about how white people can address racism. And through this act, he learns about how he can stay motivated and sustained in his own anti-racism work.

Reaching out in an intellectual way through either social justice or multicultural education was a theme in most of the participant interviews. Another example of this can be found in Tim's interview. Tim speaks of researching what it means to be white from a critical race conscious perspective and the white experience in the dynamics of racism. Tim claims that this was partly a manifestation of his being surrounded by a work and family context in which people of color are predominant, and he wanted to better understand his experience of these relationships. Tim offers:

> So, in the midst of all that, I didn't really find anything that really spoke to my experience, maybe to the male experience, that part was being covered, but to the experience of being white, I didn't identify with this whole reactionary thing that was going on, which as far as having any sort of racial analysis to it, was very superficial. It was all code talk, but I didn't identify with being the target in the

> corporation either, and just prior to working with the social work practice, I'd been working in the corporate world for seven years, so I just kind of said that framework, and said, you know, "what does speak to my experience?" I started using my research skills and found out that some people had talked about what it meant to be white people, such as Robert Terry, Judith Katz, and other people looked at white racism.

Tim notes that his goal was to raise awareness as a sort of professional practice. His research and thinking about the white experience led him to start an anti-racist organization that supports the consciousness-raising of white people. It is similar to Jane in that Tim, in the above passage, is trying to make a connection between his experience and the questions he has about that experience. In a very direct way, Tim is asking and is engaging with the kinds of questions that shape his identity as a white person.

Linda's experience also highlights the twin roles of social environment and active learning. Linda began her exploration while working at Dupont in a line position, and she took advantage of an opportunity to explore issues of diversity in a small training group. Over time, Linda developed close connections to the people in her group and at the same time the group experience acted as a mirror for her to examine her own beliefs about diversity. Eventually, through the support of a social network, increasing awareness and understanding of the dynamics of racism, and her reflection on her role as a white person, Linda became committed to engaging in white anti-racism education as her life's work. Linda talks about her early interaction in dealing directly with diversity, and in this passage one can note all three major themes that lead her to subsequent commitment to becoming an anti-racist educator:

> I'm no theoretician, that's for sure, but NTL has that philosophy that somehow if you bring people together and you give and receive feedback, good stuff happens, and that really was the core group. So, when I got into it, I started to learn especially things about…actually I think we might have first started focusing on race, but I was pretty clueless about race.

The Practice of Reflection

The third major theme that emerges when considering the factors that support these white people in committing to anti-racism education is their reflection on the intersections of their experience with people of color and other whites and what they are learning about racism and whiteness. David highlights this self-reflection that occurs, and notes that it is through the relational process of dialoguing about race and racism that gives rise to his considering what it means for him to be white. The dialogue acts as an important event in supporting his anti-racist identity development. David offers:

> I think my first real dialog about race happened when I was in my fourth year of undergrad, and all of a sudden it just made me reflect "how did I get this far without ever doing it?" and so I started going on my own journey of self-examination around these issues. I think in a lot of ways what really happened was I became addicted to that sort of self-reflective process and I think that's ... and in a lot of ways that still sort of carries me.

Later in his interview, David once again notes that self-reflection as a practice of critical race consciousness supports what he is learning about racism and whiteness:

> And he [the faculty member] uses facilitators, he uses each semester 8 to 10 small group facilitators, so when the class breaks up, there are people who can go and have smaller discussions, and so the next semester I volunteered as a facilitator for the class, and sort of continued getting some mentoring, but it was still this process of me sort of struggling with what all of this meant. These conversations were still pretty new to me, and I think I had the empathy and self reflective habits to be able to do something with the information, but I still was at a pretty comfortable distance from it.

Note that David was struggling with the meaning of anti-racism work and his role in addressing racism. He is smart enough to "do something" with what he is learning, although he is still a "comfortable distance" from committing to place himself in the center of understanding whiteness. His relationships with other facilitators coupled with

his reflecting on his experience and the information he was receiving created the context necessary for David to commit to being a white anti-racist activist.

Heloise also underscores the importance of self-reflection in her movement from passive recipient of information on the dynamics of racism to being fully engaged in thinking about whiteness. Heloise in the following passage notes that spending a summer in a different country gave her some new information about herself as well as about other people. Here thinking about these issues, and making herself a "learner" supported her movement from teacher to becoming actively involved in multicultural education:

> But another thing that also shows up in some of what I've written about, that probably helped, is that I had previous to that spent the summer on experimenting international living, living with a family in Japan, and even though that doesn't exactly give you clues for understanding racism in the U.S., what it did do was it put me in the position of being in the minority on somebody else's turf, for a period of time, and I think it helped give me a little bit of the sensitivity and sort of "how do I make myself a learner in this context, how do I recognize when I'm the minority on somebody else's turf" and deal with that. So, it could be that if I hadn't had that experience, I would have had a more difficult time in Seattle, I don't really know.

Brad discusses his commitment to anti-racism work by linking a personal struggle that he understood as an act of injustice, which he had on some level suppressed, to his work as a diversity consultant. Brad's educational background also supported his obtaining information and knowledge about economics, poverty, and class issues. When he became involved with diversity consulting, similar to Anderson, he became involved in a social context that supported his active commitment to anti-racism education and social justice.

> I guess that I have –I don't know exactly why I have a passion for social justice. I'm a survivor of incest, and I think it's connected in with that experience. I'm trained as an economist before OD consultant and the work I did in economics was in regional, urban economics related to poverty and those kinds of things. So, there was something going on in me about social justice issues, but not very

> conscious, and I haven't been conscious about the work until I really got into the diversity work in my OD practice.

The Call to Anti-racism Work and Locating One's Self-interest

To understand why and how someone is committed to engaging in anti-racist education is to raise the question of self-interest. While many participants identified the particular reasons that they became committed and stay committed to doing this work, several made a clear point of articulating their "self interest" in doing this work. I explored with each of them this question, and several indicated that coming to a good understanding of why someone would want to be actively anti-racist is an important teaching strategy, an issue to which I will return later in this chapter. When asked to reflect on their own self-interest, four themes predominated: accountability to family, alignment with spiritual values, healing from violence, addiction, or oppression in their own lives, and increasing one's own understanding of oneself.

When participants identified their own self-interest, each identified one of the four named above although half identified two or more of the four themes I cited above. For example, Tim noted that his involvement in this work squares with his spiritual values: he enjoys the self-learning that happens, and it keeps him honest and accountable to his family. It is likely that having multiple reasons that one is engaged in doing this work supports on-going commitment to it. It also illustrates that the reasons that someone comes to this work and stays committed to this work are complex, and address a number of related intellectual, psychological, and emotional needs.

Accountability to Family

Several of the participants identified family as a major factor in their on-going commitment to addressing these issues. In all of the instances where family was identified as an important consideration, some member of the family is a person of color (a different race, bi-racial or multi-racial). A few of the participants are engaged in long-term intimate relationships with people of color, have children from a different racial background or are bi-racial, or have someone within their family constellation from a different race. Those participants who identified family as an important consideration suggested that they held themselves accountable to those family members. This reference to accountability is not of a direct nature, but the participant's sense that it is important to be engaged in anti-racist work because of their love and commitment to that relationship.

Tim gives a clear example of this kind of accountability. In his interview, he spoke movingly about his 20-year relationship with his partner and his two bi-racial children. For Tim, his family is an important reason that he continues to be committed to these issues:

> My family is a big consideration. We have two children, one just turned 14 yesterday… two boys, and the other is 11. Over the course of being in an interracial relationship, I began to understand how race operated, and the part I hadn't seen before. That was kind of a gradual learning process over time, but a question that occurred to me when my children were young was that I would have to at some point account to them what I was doing, or did do, about racism. So, that was kind of a guide for me or so forth.

A father's love for his children and his role in creating a better world for them creates a compelling reason to be involved in anti-racism efforts. Tim notes that through his relationship with his wife, he was able to understand the dynamics of race and racism,

and "the part I hadn't seen before." And through this learning, he came to understand that he had an important role to play.

Alignment with Spiritual Values

Spirituality and/or religion are cited as important factors in participants' discussion about their self-interest in engaging in this work. For example, when Tim discussed the accountability he feels to his family, he also identified the role of spirituality in his story about self-interest. He continued by adding:

> The other thing goes back to my Quaker background as well. I have a good moral compass, if you will, from that, and it's one that says if you see something wrong then you're obliged to do something about it.

Later in the interview, Tim continues talking about the role of religion in framing the reasons that he is involved and how that benefits him:

> I guess my sanctuaries are my family and my faith community. With my faith community, my immediate...Quakers, our congregations are called meetings, and so we go to a meeting in Plainfield which is about 25 minutes from here, and I've worked with them some on issues of anti-racism, but it's kind of been very soft and low key over a long period of time.

While family and religion are important factors in Tim's story about self-interest, he notes clearly that to do these things is to be "consistent with who I want to be," which is an important part of his sense of self.

As another example of this alignment to spiritual values, Jane notes that doing this work is to be involved in "doing God's work."

> Right, and I think for me it's where the caring part, or the spiritual part of feeling like I'm doing God's work, or whatever you want to call it, is really recognizing that we're all connected.

Jane centers on one of the reasons that she does this work and finds value in doing it, but she quickly points out that one of her roles as an educator is to help others identify their own self-interest. Again, I will return to this notion of helping others discover their self-interest as an anti-racist educational strategy later in this chapter. In this context, however, Jane offers up an important idea about educators' self-interest: doing this work calls upon one's better self, a more self-actualized and evolved personhood that understands that implications of being connected to the human world.

Healing from Violence, Addiction, or Oppression

While several of the participants spoke eloquently of being connected to others through family relationships or religious or spiritual relationships, many of the participants also identified that their self-interest stems from a desire to be connected to themselves. A recurring theme that emerged throughout several of the participant interviews is the desire to heal a part of themselves that had been a source of psychic pain. Some of the participants connect their work for social justice with their journey of healing from violence in their lives. For other participants, it is connected to coming to terms with an addiction. And still for others, anti-racism work is another facet of their work for larger social justice. The key element that runs through all of these different aspects of self-interest is that anti-racism work is part of an important self-journey toward wholeness and healing.

The interview with Brad went emotionally deep fairly quickly, and he was very open about how these different aspects of his sense of self were connected, and that anti-racism education is an outgrowth of that awareness. He shares:

> It's what keeps me alive and you know, that's group membership, but it's also me as well. I really hate being unconscious, and I think that being, operating, and living out dominant group memberships, and most of mine are, the dynamics around that are to support us and stay unconscious. That's another connection to being an incest survivor where the pressures in my family were to never, ever, ever talk about it, to stay silent. And so, from a lot of different angles, there's been a lot of support in my life to be silent and be unconscious and the depression was part of that, suicidal was part of that, and part of the process of getting sober in my life, which happened in 1990, was to really connect up. If I'm going to stay fully alive, I have to work continually, and part of it for me is staying connected with work around social justice work. It's staying connected with people who challenge me. It's around continuing to challenge myself. It's about staying alive.

Brad's efforts around social justice, as he names here, are a way to move toward staying alive – a way of living that is authentic and real and whole. Working in anti-racism education provides an important way to connect with others and be challenged to move beyond his comfort zone. Anderson also identifies an addiction that he has and his work with a 12-step program provides a mechanism to connect with others, stay grounded and attuned to the present, and "stay alive." For both Brad and Anderson, then, anti-racist work is a way to support other aspects of their life's journey in an integrated way. When I asked Anderson what he thought might be the connections between his 12-step program and anti-racism work, he posited:

> It's never even occurred to me to think then what's the link to anti-racism work, except to know that I do believe that many white people are very, very scared about doing any work around race, and so it might be that a lot of structure is helpful.

While he offered this thought somewhat tentatively, he also shared that:

> I ended up getting involved in all male, mixed sexual orientations, but all-male and mostly white male, 12-step groups that I totally loved. And, it was suddenly like I found, probably the white male support group, and especially male support groups that I had tried to form and be a member of, and always struggled needing.

And the result of his involvement was that it "allowed me to accept the mistakes I had made and accept other people for the mistakes they've made, and in general, lower my judgmentalness of other people."

Several of the participants name internalized oppression as an important reason why they are committed to this work. For these educators, understanding the dynamics of the internalized oppression they experience has been a meaningful conduit to become engaged in anti-racism education. Jane notes that:

> To really...because of my own anger and internalized oppression issues, you know, it wasn't to make people feel bad, but I know that was a piece of it. "Look at what we've done," I really think that this is about people have to come at this place having more, not less, and that really getting whites to understand the liberation of dealing with their racism helps them be more of a human being, not less of a human being.

For Jane, anti-racist action enables her (and others) to become more fully human, and move from old patterns of thinking and behaving that anger and internalized oppression have co-created. Her self-interest is to be "more of a human being."

Linda offers a similar perspective when asked why she is involved in this work, and what she gets out of it. She answers this by going back to the beginning of her journey in understanding these issues:

> I got to the diversity work as a very unhappy person, I mean, my 20s and early 30s were really awful times. I was so mad, from a really psychological perspective, I was a very angry person in a very polite body, and had no idea that all of this was going to play out when I [got] to the core group. When we were doing the race and gender work, I started to learn things that put the system in perspective and that was incredibly helpful because I learned it wasn't just me. As we had the conversations, and the one up/one down power dynamics came out, and they taught us the race and power continuum and all that and the gender and power continuum so there was theoretical context. But there was a lot of conversation, a lot of challenging back and forth. Janice [the group facilitator] pulled me aside one day and said in addition to everything we're learning, there's more going on with you than just learning about a system.

For Linda, the process of engaging in social justice work is connected to her understanding the roots of her own anger and internalized oppression. Similar to Jane, these two parallel processes are tightly bound together and they provide tangible value for her.

Interestingly, the participants' experience of internalized oppression is, of course, regarding another dimension of their identity other than race. And while all of the participants address the range of social justice issues in their work, most of them focus very directly on issues of racism and whiteness. The specific reasons that this might be are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but this researcher has wondered why issues of racism and whiteness continue to captivate us; Anderson notes that: "I have been starting to suspect for several years that the issue is about the level of intimacy that happens across race. It's different than the level of intimacy across gender and sexual orientation." While the reason is likely more complex and nuanced then white people not "knowing" people of color, Anderson points out a potentially important reason for white people becoming directly involved with anti-racism work, even though these white educators may have to struggle with sexism, heterosexism, or anti-Semitism, for example, in their own lives.

None of the white men interviewed for this study cited internalized oppression as a salient reason that they came to anti-racism work or continue to be committed to it, or what value they derive from being engaged in it. The women in this study, however, spoke more specifically to how their experience of sexism (or another form of oppression) supported their making connections to anti-racism work. For the men in this study, there was a different reason for their self-interest; while a couple of them identified

family or spirituality as their self-interest (like Tim did), most identified personal self-knowledge as the key reason and benefit for engaging in this work.

Increasing One's Own Understanding of Oneself

Originally, the last theme that I was going to write about was self-concept. The notion of "how I see myself" was an important idea to expound upon in this section on self-interest. Most of the participants in this study do want to be seen as doing good work – work that they can be proud of engaging in, and the self-actualization needs that are met by engaging in anti-racism education supports this view they have of themselves. However, as I reread the passages for this theme, another, more focused theme resonated: a desire to learn about oneself. David noted in his interview: "altruism...yeah. I just would like to believe that I would do it even if I didn't have something to gain from it. But I don't know, given the dynamics around the power and privilege, that I would do that."

For David, self-interest in doing this work comes primarily from what it provides him in terms of self-knowledge. David shared:

> I think ultimately it was about my own need to grow. Sometimes, just bluntly, honestly here, sometimes I wonder if I didn't get out of doing this work the growth that I do get out of it, would I be doing it? I wonder about that a lot, and I can't honestly say for sure that I would. In some ways it's painful to say that, but that's the honest truth.

David was not alone, as others also revealed that, beyond the self-actualization to which one might aspire, it was the increase in self-understanding, and perhaps, self-acceptance through that understanding, that provides the greatest value to these educators. Even

when the reason they offer for their self-interest is ostensibly about others, it underscores the real need for understanding and growth, as when Sandra shared that:

> I was always really attracted to working with kids who had been kicked out of school because I always felt somehow that if we could be effective with them, then we could teach anybody. Like, who wants to teach in the suburbs, that's easy, that was my thought. But, I had gotten into that work because I was involved in adventure education, a program that was working with adjudicated youth through adventure ed, and that led me into the mental health world. I think maybe I was just attracted to people who were disenfranchised, for whom the system was not working, because I wanted to understand that experience better. My path makes complete sense to me; though other people would say it doesn't, but it always was very emergently developmental and organic for me. It all made sense.

One of the participants, Sandra, gave voice to a reason for self-interest that I had suspected I might find, but was limited to her interview. It was not a theme in the interviews, but her openness about her self-interest (beyond the passage above) and the reason she offered I thought was important to include here, if for no other reason then I think it highlights a real honest reflection on the "What is in it for me?" question. Sandra talked about desiring a sense of affirmation, but not in the "Look what I did!" way that speaks to a lack of self-awareness as to one's motivations. I present her thoughts here, at some length, and will identify a couple of issues as a way of concluding this section.

> So, despite my best effort on a daily basis, it's not in the self-interest that most people of color take a risk on white folks, I understand that, I get that; and yet, all my life, I have had people of color spend tremendous amounts of time working on me to build my consciousness and my commitment, and many other people who don't really care about my consciousness or commitment who just befriended me, and I said that even though it's completely against the manifesto in our work for people to do this, I think at this point in my life I really appreciate it when people throw caution to the wind and take something on faith and just decide that they're willing to be in the moment with me, as a friend or as a colleague, and understand all the vulnerabilities and the mistakes and lack of understanding, and experiences that I have, and I said I know that that violates all the rules, that's not what we're supposed to say, but I enjoy the relationships that I have with people and in some ways I even said that I think that sometimes people who do this work get way too preoccupied with the rules of engagement, and that I look to people who are outside this work of all races and they seem to be able to figure out relationships

> better than we do, and they never talk about power and privilege, as far as I can tell, or maybe they do and they just negotiate it differently. And there's a part of me that really admires that and appreciates the wisdom in that for whatever reason those of us who do this seem to sometimes to allow it to be lost on us, or it is lost on us, because we are always up here and never down here.

At the end of the day, it is about having trusting relationships that affirm the other person, where "positive self-regard" of each person in the relationship fosters a greater sense of wholeness. For Sandra, and I suspect for many other white people, being involved in anti-racist work creates opportunities for her to engage with people, across racial lines, and ask to be trusted to some degree (even when there is no reason that a person of color should) so that a relationship can evolve. And that out of that new relationship, other things become possible: new ways of looking at family, at friendships, at art, at history, and so on. As Brad noted in an earlier part of this section, engaging in these crucial conversations, affirming others and being affirmed, and deepening the relationships can lead to a greater sense of self-actualization.

Like Sandra, many of the participants noted at some point in their interviews that people of color had invested incredible time, energy, and care in them in order to raise their awareness, equip them with relationship skills, and support new ways of understanding. Indeed, she points out a pattern in these interviews that these white educators were largely impacted by people of color in their early journey and call to this work. Sandra's openness points out another important issue – a relationship deepens when an offered gift is received with care and given again. The "gift" here is not a physical gift but a relationship gift. The dynamics of cultural gift giving, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation, certainly play a role for Sandra in her "self-interest" and what value she derives from doing this work.

Current Expressions of Their Current Anti-racism Work

These anti-racism educators "educate" other people about whiteness in a variety of ways. In the interviews, four primary avenues were articulated and are presented here. These venues consist of activism, teaching, researching, and consulting. Participants also spoke about coaching or advising, and other community-related work, but these efforts were sporadic and one-off rather than a primary focus for doing their anti-racism work and nor were these ways of engaging in anti-racism work a pattern across the interviews. Of the four avenues for engaging in anti-racism education, the majority of these participants viewed activism as a primary tool for engaging in anti-racism work, educating others, and addressing whiteness. In other words, they view activism as a tool for education.

Activism as a Way of Doing Anti-racism Work

What participants viewed as "activism" varied across the group. Some of the participants viewed activism as engaging in activities in a system to help change the system, while others viewed activism as engaging outside of a system in order to bring about change in a system. Participants, likewise, varied in how they view their role within an activist setting. For example, some of the participants see their role primarily as "witnessing" in a racially unjust setting; others view their role as one of organizing and leading, while others think that "agitating" through demonstration or protests is the primary avenue in which their anti-racist activism manifests itself.

David's interview was illustrative of what several participants discussed regarding the role of activism in their anti-racism educational efforts. Early in the interview, David

indicated: "I mean I really consider myself to be an activist first, and I try to use that as a framework for everything I do, like in this job." For him, being an anti-racist activist is the primary means by which he addresses racism in his community. His role as a faculty member is the context in which he is able to live his activism. When I asked David about how his activism manifests itself in his current work, he explained:

> What I do primarily is activism within P-12 schools. I mean my full time job is teaching Hamlin University education courses, but I would say first and foremost the activism and the time I spend in K-12 schools working with teachers and administrators on really dealing with the issue of race, along with all different kinds of social justice issues, but dealing with the issue of race head-on, having honest conversation about it, working on recreating policy that addresses race directly, and dealing with the achievement gap, the digital divide, some of these issues. It's a very educational cognizant kind of issue.

In this manner, David's activism is focused on system's change within the system. It is of an educational nature, but he pushes leaders to "deal with the issue of race head-on" by raising challenging questions of how pedagogy support gaps in student achievement.

Different manifestations of activism require different levels of sacrifice. David shared that being an activist through engaging school administrators in "honest conversations" requires some level of sacrifice, although he understands that his whiteness and maleness provides a level of access and privilege in dealing with the issues. Still, he tries to be "vulnerable" to the extent he can be, as when he notes that:

> It means spending a lot of time volunteering in schools. It means going to any sorts of meetings or rallies around the way social justice types of issues are going to be handled in the schools. It means, in a less practical and broader sense, it means making myself vulnerable for causes, putting myself on the line, recognizing that I sort of am in a position to have, sort of because of the privilege – not just around whiteness but maleness, heterosexuality, just about every possible issue that I have an "in" in certain places where I can make myself vulnerable, and ultimately I'm not as vulnerable as a, you know, woman of color with dreadlocks and an accent.

David also is privileged because of his role as a university professor and his professional training, and this too provides a certain level of access and credibility. At the same time, David understands that in order to create systems change, he needs to use whatever access he has to a certain effect and so the faculty role is a platform from which he can engage in meaningful dialogue with administrators from various school systems.

As he notes, one of the questions that David asks himself is whether he is really contributing to something meaningful or is just "all talk." This theme came up several times during the interviews, such as with Sandra, Diana, and Jane. Anti-racism education, from their perspective, must have a clear action component. Otherwise, such thinking is self-indulgent – it can make one "feel okay by being around people who are talking about this" but in the end serves no purpose beyond satisfying one's intellectual curiosity or feelings of guilt. Diana raised this point directly in her interview. She indicated that she sometimes struggles with doing more to confront racism beyond theorizing and teaching about it.

While Sandra and Anderson, as well as others, name anti-racism education as a legitimate form of social activism, not everyone was as comfortable about the value that is derived by just teaching or training students/participants about racism and whiteness. For most of the participants, awareness of these issues without engaging in *doing* something about it is not anti-racism work. For example, Diana believes that education and activism are slightly different in purpose and context and that both are required:

> I guess I see anti-racist education and anti-racist activism, I think that's the other piece of it that you have to have otherwise you're just thinking about it. So you have to think, you know, where's the activism in your life, and I feel that in mine if a certain kind of situation presents itself, then I certainly will address it, but I don't live in a particular community where I see it as sort of challenging, other than the academic community, and I don't have much work in that.

In this context, it is not enough to think about anti-racism or whiteness; it is just as important to "do" something with this awareness and understanding. And she questions whether she is really living up to her own definition of being an anti-racist educator:

> I'm not involved in politics or I'm involved in making sure people on the school committee are going to have x, y, z qualifications or I'm not working with a community organization, you know, corporate things or more social justice stuff, so I'm not doing those kinds of things except for the academic community, and that, for me, I think would make my life more complete if I were to use the word anti-racist educator. The activism part, I think, in a part of it and right now I'm able to do that.

Diana's question about whether she is "doing enough" is something that many of the participants noted that they have struggled with at some point although, as Sandra notes above, she now feels comfortable in the range of activism she is engaged in and that bringing people's stories into the center is a legitimate form of activism.

Other participants view activism in the more familiar "take to the streets" manner. For example, Anderson also views himself as an activist and couples his current consulting work with a long-term commitment to social activism:

> Then, I think a third area has been joining and working with community organizations, like the Cambridge Human Rights Commission. In that setting, for instance, I saw myself as pushing the group to deal with racism when I sensed, at least, when I joined it five or six years ago, that we were always talking around racism and not wanting to name it as such. That's a place where I saw myself as an activist. Then, I'd say, the last couple of years I've done a lot of anti-war work, organizing protests, going to protests, doing a lot of vigiling, all that work. And I really see that as anti-racist work. So those are some of the things I've done. I go to a week-long protest in southwest Georgia every year where we walk about 100 miles to protest racism in county and state jails down there. There's some kind of walking and witnessing I do. I guess those are the kinds of things I do.

In this context, Anderson "organizes protests" and engages in a lot of "witnessing" as a way to raise awareness regarding racial injustice. While some of the organizing and protests he has been involved with are not primarily anti-racist in nature, such as the anti-

war work, Anderson notes that it is important to address racial justice in other movements for peace or broader social justice. Similarly, Sandra has long been involved in direct social activism as a way of addressing racial injustice:

> I'm really an activist. I've been a long-term activist domestically. I've been arrested more times than I can count, so there's a part of me that feels like if I'm not pissing somebody off, I must not be doing a good job, but I think I'm moving away from some of those perspectives. I'm really trying to pay attention to people's stories and find ways to bring people into the center instead of to teach them about it. That's kind of my plan.

Again, like Anderson, Sandra is working through a different method for engaging in activism that moves the focus away from the activity to the issue. It is clearly an educational method by listening differently and "bring[ing] people into the center."

Anderson's and Sandra's current context for doing anti-racist education includes consulting or teaching, but social activism is a primary lens by which they view their consulting or teaching work. Not to put too fine a point on it, anti-racism education is both an intellectual project as well as a behavioral enterprise. Their responses are consistent with David and others who identified anti-racism education as a verb rather than a noun. Activism, however, constitutes a range of thinking and behavior, as Anderson noted during his interview.

Anderson notes that activism for racial justice is a continuum of thinking and behavior. While he continues to organize protests and vigils, he understands the limit of what he feels comfortable engaging in. Potentially it is an issue of historical context, or age or one's position in life (having family and other responsibilities); the important thing from Anderson's perspective, is to acknowledge the range of options available in engaging in social activism:

> I don't know. I guess there's so much I have to learn. That all said, I do it the way I do it because I have a preference for it. It seems to work for me and it's the way I want to be in the world, and I really respect that other people do this in vastly different ways, and I really respect that there are really a lot of different ways in doing this work. One of the cool things in the book that we were quite committed to - Anne, Harry, and I - was not judging the guys in the book on whether their anti-racist work was better or worse, more or less effective. We did care that they integrated both personal and systemic analysis, that it was about looking at themselves and institutional change in some way. But, that said, we ended up at one point cataloging, sort of, the different types of behaviors, the different types of things they were doing to challenge racism. We got a list of about 18 things, and they were quite different. And I really liked that because we were into saying, "This is the way you should do it. This is the way you should do it," and it was like each of these guys had figured out ways that a) worked for them, b) made sense in the context, and in some cases, c) were guided by the people of color they were working with who said this is what we need you to do, and the white guys said okay.

Anderson understands that his way of engaging in activism may be different from many of the white men that he interviewed for his book, and that that all of these can be "right," given the time, purpose, context, and so forth. Further, Anderson articulates his limits in being involved and notes the boundaries by which he will engage. One of the important ideas that the participants in this research project underscore is that anti-racism education can be demanding, and having clear goals and boundaries around addressing racist acts is critical to productive self-care.

One of the issues that Anderson raises in the passage above is that one of the requirements he and his co-editors had in presenting these white anti-racist men is that the subjects had the ability to articulate a personal and systemic analysis of racism. For Anderson, it is important to connect a deeper awareness and understanding of racism and whiteness with one's activism. And although there may be a range of options to engage in activism, the action needs to be rooted in an analysis of the dynamics of racism and one's

own identity. For Anderson, like other participants, activism is both a part of and apart from anti-racist education.

Teaching as a Way of Doing Anti-racism Work

Another major theme in the interviews is the notion that these participants view themselves as teachers. Several participants noted that a primary vehicle for engaging in anti-racism education is through the formal educational system. In this manner, they have the ability and latitude to engage in critical conversations regarding race, racism, and whiteness with students who are going through an important phase of their identity and psycho-social development. While several cited the importance of K-12 education, all of the participants in this study that have a formal role in an educational system teach at a college or university. The participants teach courses in education, multicultural education, sociology, or psychology at both the undergraduate and graduate level. All of the participants who teach at the college level have graduate degrees (doctorates) in their field, except one participant that was an advanced doctoral student at the time of her interview. For these participants, the goal of teaching is to raise a greater awareness of racism and whiteness with students – particularly white students. Emblematic of most of the interviews, Diana notes:

> I would say I'm an educator and I certainly want.... One of the goals is to bring students to an awareness that they can do something about racism, I'm talking about white students, because that's who they are predominantly, and so I guess in that vein I'm teaching them about racism as a norm and challenge racism, therefore being anti-racist.

Jackie holds both a faculty and administrative appointment at the college she works at in New England. She sees her primary role as a faculty member, and she teaches

undergraduate courses on the "psychology of racism" and on "whiteness." In addition, she teaches undergraduate students who facilitate inter-group dialogue courses with their peers. Jackie shares:

> Currently, the type of anti-racism work that I do is really connected to being an educator. It's kind of one of my commitments – to anti-racism work through education and being explicit about that. So, I do that both in my teaching and also as a member of the community here at this institution. I teach intergroup dialog courses, so I teach the facilitators the content around race and racism, and then how to facilitate. And, I teach in the psychology and education department courses on whiteness, I've also taught Psychology of Racism, so I come at it both from the starting point on racism and now have kind of shifted to looking at it in terms of whiteness.

Jackie's teaching experience includes the fairly traditional, didactic form of teaching in a classroom along with a more experientially-based form of teaching where she is helping others to learn how to teach and facilitate discussions on issues of racism and whiteness. Diana, David, Heloise, Shelly, and Sandra all have a similar experience in that they teach teacher-education courses (as in multicultural issues in teacher education) or courses specifically on racism or social justice education. In addition, Jackie and Sandra also teaches courses designed to instruct undergraduate or graduate level students on how to teach a workshop or class specifically on racism. Jackie and Sandra both acknowledge that teaching others how to design and facilitate anti-racism education requires a different level of energy and effort, and while the larger implications of this are outside the scope of this dissertation, the notion that there are important differences between those who teach about whiteness and those who teach others who teach others about whiteness is an important issue to consider. I return to this issue later in the chapter when I discuss some of the themes related to how their sense of whiteness has influenced their teaching.

Several of the participants also teach outside of the college environment in professional associations, such as the National Training Laboratories (NTL) Institute. These educators are not affiliated with any formal college or university as a faculty member. For example, Brad notes that this is an important way in which he engages in anti-racism education. The newly created program at NTL is for diversity practitioners who want a deeper understanding of how to design and facilitate experientially-based social justice education. Brad explains:

> Myself, Kathy Royal, Delyte Frost, and Rick Huntley along with the support of Elsie Cross – we're starting a new diversity practitioners certificate program at NTL that I'm very excited about. It will start in January, and we're just starting the recruiting process. I've put a lot of energy into helping to define that and to move that through… It's now institutionalized, and we are going to do, it is going to happen, and that program is going to be training diversity and social justice practitioners, and I'm just very excited about that. So, we'll be holding an oppression lens in a world where it shows up in programs.... There's not very many places that have it. UMASS is one of the few academic programs that holds it.

While the particular audience is for diversity practitioners who work in a variety of settings, NTL-sponsored programs tend to draw many of their participants from corporate and government agencies. The audience also tends to be a little older than the traditional undergraduate population where many of this study's participants teach. Jane is another participant who has an affiliation with NTL and will likely be engaged in this program; thus, there are other ways in which participants engage in teaching anti-racism education that is beyond the traditional college environment.

Consulting as a Way of Doing Anti-racism Work

A third way in that these participants engage in anti-racism education is through their consulting work. In this manner, participants work with a specific client

organization and follow a specific process for assessing, planning, and intervening in the system. While the target of this work might be to re-engineer old policies and practices or to develop new ones, among making other organization development interventions, many organizational consultants intervene in the client system by addressing the individual and group level understanding of diversity and social justice issues. Consultants have an opportunity to educate members of the client system in the dynamics of racism, whiteness, and social justice.

Many of the participants who consult to client organizations entered into that work principally through teaching and organizing. Having an opportunity to work with an entire organization and to support the development of a more inclusive, just, and multicultural organization is an opportunity that these consultants have come to value, although there was some trepidation at the beginning. This trepidation is the result of their initial analysis of doing work for an organization, particularly a for-profit organization, as being in conflict with their anti-capitalist analysis and value system. These consultants, however, all came to see important value in how their social justice efforts resulted in tangible outcomes for the people of the client systems, and this has served to engage in them in continuing their consulting work.

Jane was a university professor and began doing some organizational consulting. She became aware of the impact that she and her consulting colleagues were able to have on the senior leaders of the organization with whom she was working, and the eventual impact this was having on the quality of work life for the employees. Jane felt like she was making a difference, and through those early experiences, she decided that she would

make consulting her life's work. For Jane, consulting is the primary way in which she engages in her anti-racism education:

> I had some opportunities to do work at a corporate level because a colleague of mine from NTL had asked me to join him when his business partner died. So, it was a confluence of things. I had always done, because of the white awareness work, education and training outside of the university, but that was having much more appeal and excitement to me than a life staying at the academy for the next 30 years. I could not think that through, and I started to make real change. The problem for me before was that I thought corporations were the evil empire, which they are, but you know, the fact of the matter was I had made it be so either/or and I realized that if you had leaders committed to making change, then you could actually do something about it.

Jane acknowledges that her consulting experience held more interest for her than her research and teaching work at the university, but it was the opportunity to see change occur in an organization that eventually led her to work in consulting full time.

Brad has also been engaged in doing anti-racism education through organizational consulting work for some time. Brad notes that, as a white man, his involvement in organizational consulting was gradual to begin with as more established diversity consultants tried to determine his potential fit into their organization. Brad explains:

> That led to work with Elsie Y. Cross. Fred Miller asked me if I would do work in KJCG and then after about a 3-year/4-year dance, they asked me to be part of that network. So, I guess I just really had a passion for finding ways to support myself to engage with people who that was important to them. I think as a white man there is a reluctance that I've yet....I think people have to figure out who you are and what you're about and have to see you over time before there's acceptance. So I did work in creating a network and then also work I did in organizations. I basically did diversity oppression work, social justice work. It's in everything that's going on in organizations so it may not be a reason that they ask me to come in and do work, but it ends up being a piece of the work.

Now, Brad does anti-racism education through his consulting practice. He notes that:

> I'm a consultant in organizations. I have been...partly it's my age. I'm retired from the federal government so I've got a pension, so I am able to be selective about which organizations I work in, who I do work with, what kind of work I do. And,

> increasingly my consulting practice is more and more around diversity and more and more around social justice work.

Research as a Way of Doing Anti-racism Work

Jackie, while primarily an academic, also works with client organizations to support their capacity to address issues of diversity and inclusion. In her work, however, her consulting focuses on other educational systems. The primary stakeholders for these client systems are the students, so Jackie works with other faculty and administrators on developing a more inclusive curriculum and campus for students. Jackie offers:

> I do consulting, a lot of consulting, with faculty and faculty development around inclusive pedagogy and curriculum and embedded in that is discussion about equity and justice and issues of race, disability, and whiteness and how faculty are actually thinking about who is sitting in their classroom.

Like Jackie, several other participants who are faculty consult to educational systems. The primary intent of their work is less about changing institutional structures and policies, per se, and more about changing the client system's practices. These practices are both pedagogical in nature as well as programmatic. While most of the faculty discussed their roles as activists, teachers, and consultants, they also discussed their role as researchers. The last theme regarding the current contexts in which these participants engage in anti-racism education is through their role as scholars. The majority of the participants who work on a college campus as a faculty member noted that through the researching and publishing of scholarly material, they are able to advance the theoretical and practical understanding of racism, whiteness, and social justice. For example, one of the participants, Sandra, has been engaged in research and

writing on the links between the educational system and the prison system in the United States. She offers:

> work that I do as an academic, which focuses on the link between schools and prisons, and the concept of schools as breeding grounds for prisons, primarily for black male youths, but also to some extent for Latino youth, and really all working class youth, but it disproportionately affects these groups. That's obviously based on what we were just talking about, kind of the evolution of that part of my life, working with adjudicated youth. It's interesting, because it also links to multicultural education and whiteness, which are my three areas of research, the multicultural ed, the whiteness, and the prison stuff. So, how that links to whiteness is that there is a real strong connection between special ed referrals and then subsequent incarceration.

Sandra believes the more that these connections are understood and articulated, the greater the level of scholarly anti-racism research is available. Certainly, the more visible research on anti-racism work is and the more opportunities there are to discuss this research, the greater the opportunity to impact perceptions, policies and behavior.

In response to the first sub-research question, the 12 participants discussed early events that precipitated the awareness of racism, including the influence of family, different approximating experiences, attending an anti-racism training or seminar, and involvement in cross-race relationships. In their discussion of critical events in the development of their white anti-racist identity, major themes included being involved in social activism, strong and supportive relationships with people of color, and a very conscious attention to reflecting on racial dynamics. In sharing the nature of their call to anti-racism education and their self-interest in engaging in this work, these white educators talked primarily about being accountable to family and alignment with spiritual values. However, many noted more of a focus on themselves, such as healing from violence, addiction, or oppression, or simply increasing one's own understanding of

oneself. And when asked to describe how they currently engage in this work, these educators talked about activism, teaching, consulting and research as primary avenues.

Having elaborated on the four theme clusters related to how white anti-racism educators describe their interest in anti-racism education and their journey as white educators, I turn my attention to the second sub-research question regarding how white anti-racism educators describe their teaching and approach to this work. It is in their descriptions of their teaching that one can begin to see subtle distinctions in how the question of whiteness takes shape. While many of the goals and pedagogical considerations parallel traditional anti-racism education, these educators highlight the role and responsibility of white people in the problem of racism.

How White Anti-racism Educators Describe their Teaching and their Approach to their Work

The second of the four secondary research questions focuses on how white anti-racism educators describe their teaching and approach to doing this work. An exploration into how these educators describe their approach is closely linked to the larger question of what whiteness is and how whiteness informs their practice. Can their descriptions of their teaching approaches tell us anything about how they conceptualize whiteness or how they believe whiteness may have influenced their teaching style? In this section, I describe several themes that come from this secondary research question. I return to the underlying question about the links between their descriptions of their work and their understanding of whiteness in Chapter 5.

The interview guide covered four major interview questions under the secondary research question. The four interview questions address goals, content, process, and style. Therefore, the themes I present below follow this line of questioning, and I have grouped the themes within these four areas. The first theme "cluster" explores the range of goals or learning outcomes of these educators – What are these educators trying to achieve through their anti-racism education? The second grouping of themes focuses on the "what" of their teaching – What are the key concepts and issues these educators address through their work? The third addresses the pedagogical issue of "how" they teach – How do they structure the learning process to achieve their goals? And the fourth area is a personal reflection on their teaching style; in this section, I lay out several themes about issues these educators think are important in terms of how they teach.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

During the interviews I asked the participants what they hoped to accomplish or achieve by engaging in anti-racism education. All of them quickly and enthusiastically responded to my question; it was clear to this researcher that they had each thought through the learning goals for their work. While each of the anti-racism educators I interviewed offered what they believe are important goals in doing this work, there was some variation in the responses. Some of them also acknowledged that their goals had changed slightly over time. Others offered that determining which goals to address is something of a challenge given the often short space of time these educators had with their participants. All of them shared that it is important that their participants "learn something and do something."

Several of this study's participants discussed the challenge of being clear in their learning outcomes. The dilemma for these educators is in determining what is vital to include in a training, workshop, or class – given the audience make-up and time limitations. Should the learning outcomes cover a breadth of information about race, racism, and whiteness, or should they be more focused and cover the history of whiteness? Even then, these educators wondered, what part of history to cover, given the complexity of racial history. Should the education be focused on awareness or more focused on how to take action? There are trade-offs in making these decisions, and these educators were very aware of the difficulty in making these decisions. Diana summed it up by noting that:

> I think my goals have been scaled down a little bit in that I think I used to try to do it all. I think I tried to raise consciousness, make them culturally competent, and get them to be activists all within 14 weeks.

Diana has become more forgiving and generous in thinking about learning outcomes. She understands that she cannot do everything she would like to do, and is now more focused on what she wants to accomplish in the classroom. Another interview participant is less forgiving of herself in thinking about learning outcomes. She states that:

> It's painful, it's hard, we're kind of constructing as we go, it looks way different this year than it did last year, and we're constantly like "is this working and how is it that we're coming at it this way" and rethinking old paradigms as a way of engaging students in this dialog and in conversations, so you know, anyway, I think it is.... I know that there's no way to say, "This is what whiteness is, and this is what racism is, and I'll teach that, and here's the materials I use to teach that" because I know that it's an ever-changing thing, and becomes more elusive and more subtle in many ways, more overt in some ways and more subtle in other ways, and that's part of the intricacies and the complexities of racism and whiteness and how it works.

For Jackie, it is important to be comprehensive and relevant. She believes she is constantly re-evaluating the content and process of her course, and trying to determine

what is most important to accomplish in the limited time she has with her students. And it not just the learning outcomes or goals she is re-evaluating, but the "what" and the "how" of her course. The project of determining what the new class will be like is "painful" and "hard."

Heloise also notes having to think about learning goals. But for her, the project of determining learning outcomes is more straight-forward. She posits that rather than take large groups of white people involved in teacher education and having them participate in multicultural education classes or anti-racism classes, focus on those individuals who are interested and have the energy for teaching in a multicultural context and really focus energy and resources on their development. She adds:

> I think that there's a place for taking everybody and trying to help them understand racism, regardless of whether they're going to teach or not. But to me that's a different question than the question of who's actually going to be a really good teacher for the cultural education of the kids who are actually in the classroom. To me those are two different questions.

For Heloise, the question of learning outcomes is more focused because of who is in the audience (the student teacher). Having an understanding of who should be in the room and why they should be there leads to greater clarity in terms of learning outcomes.

Tim raises a different question as it relates to goal clarity. For Tim, the question is about the expectation of the audience and the interaction of the audience with the educator. Tim believes that the audience seeks a particular kind of conversation, and that this expectation drives much of how training is constructed. During the interview, he raised this issue, and added that:

> I think [one understanding] white people need to develop is the significance of love and justice, and this was pointed out to me by a quote I saw that had nothing to do with race. I can't find the source either, though I've tried. It was an old book, from like the 1940s, but the person said something to the effect that from time

> immemorial people in a position of privilege have talked about love, and people who have been oppressed have talked about justice. When you look at work that white people do, let's be generous and call it anti-racism or race relations, it's coming from a position of love and often a very deep, profound need for love and unity and joining. But that's the extent of it, and that kind of encompasses their full understanding of what needs to be done. There's nothing in there about justice, and justice is not the same as vengeance necessarily, but the white concept is that it is. So there's a lot of fear on the part of white people about bringing in justice as an issue. If you look at certainly what black people do and people of color in general, they come from a framework of justice, and forget the love, let's just talk about justice here, and then we can love each other afterwards. That's a very basic, kind of core difference that somehow white people need to get over and get past in their understanding of what it takes to build interracial relationships.

Tim discussed the need to focus more energy on "justice" as the context for developing anti-racist education. He believes that before the specific learning outcomes are developed, the larger context by which white educators think about anti-racism education needs to be rethought. It was an interesting point that he raised in that the assumptions that educators bring with them about the audience's needs and expectations, one's sense of self as an educator, and the like, are important to think about as they have a very real and tangible impact on the design of learning outcomes for anti-racism education.

Creating Awareness

All of the participants noted at some point during their interview that "creating awareness" was an essential learning goal in their anti-racism education efforts. The notion of "awareness" does not suggest that their participants are "unaware," but that they come to such learning opportunities from are a range of awareness levels. For these educators, the primary reason for increasing white people's awareness of racism and whiteness, and how it manifests itself in contemporary society, is so that these

participants can identify racism in their own social contexts and intervene. In this equation, awareness begets action.

Brad speaks to the notion of awareness impacting participants' future behavior when he suggests that:

> I probably work more on the side of awareness than I do on the side of action, because I think if we really are able to stay aware, then we almost can't stand ourselves unless we're doing something. Well, our dominant group behavior is fixing things. That's where we go automatically so if we fix things out of awareness, you know, we almost can't keep ourselves from going and fixing things. and finding solutions and doing stuff, so I tend to be more on the awareness side.

Similarly, Diana suggests that the goal of anti-racism education is to support others in making changes that will advance the larger cause of social justice. Diana notes:

> One of the goals is to bring students to an awareness that they can do something about racism. I'm talking about white students, because that's who they are predominantly, and so I guess in that vein I'm teaching them about racism as a norm and challenge racism, therefore being anti-racist.

For both Brad and Diana, the goal of their anti-racism education is squarely focused on enhancing others' awareness; therefore, their approach to developing content, designing workshops and presenting material is one of creating awareness for participants through the development of cognitive and emotional dissonance. As Brad suggests, the hope is that creating a high level of dissonance can result in people going out to "fix things."

Diana offers that the task of educators is to provide a lot of information aimed at creating the cognitive and emotional dissonance that arises from being confronted with a different reality – of both the inequality that exists but often is not apparent as well as the level of privilege that exists that stems from that inequality:

> So, the first step is increasing racial consciousness. It's about privilege as much as it's about inequality. After that comes, "okay, what do you do about it?" And

> between those things, between heightening consciousness and becoming active, a lot more information has to be gathered.

Jane also highlights the goal of awareness in anti-racism education. For Jane, this goal comes from her own evolving understanding about why white people would want to engage in anti-racism work. Jane raises the notion of "self-interest" in relation to the goal of developing an awareness of racism. She posits:

> So, to me, understanding the complexity and the depth of this has been huge, and the challenge I think was early on I used to use my self-interest as the core to motivate others. What I've learned and have been working on is trying to find the system's and the individual's self-interest. So, it's not from my frame, it's from their frame, so the work on the organizational imperative and other key things about what's in it for an individual or system to change has been really something that I've understood much more deeply.

She notes that early on in her work, she used her own self-interest in doing anti-racism work as the basis for engaging others in understanding racism and taking responsibility. The goal has evolved to supporting others in developing an awareness of their own self-interest. Jane believes that participants are more likely to take action if they understand their own deep interest in working for racial and social justice.

Behavioral Change

Of course, the notion of "awareness" as a specific goal for these educators is in reference to the more fundamental motivation for their work. Developing an awareness of racism with other white people is accomplished so that they will change their own behaviors, challenge racism in their lives, and perhaps, work for social justice. Thus, while the primary goal is awareness, ostensibly the fundamental goal for their work is behavioral change that supports racial justice. Sandra speaks to the twin axes that are awareness and action when she offers that:

> I mean a socio-politically located multicultural education, not a heroes and holidays kind of ...food, fun, fiestas, not that kind, I mean that's great on one level, but that's not all of it. So, something that takes into account socio-economics, so when they come into the classroom, I have high expectations for what they'll get, but what I hope they leave with, from a multicultural educational perspective, is that in the world being made a little bit bigger for themselves, that they actually now can walk a little bit of that road in somebody else's shoes.

The world of these participants is made "bigger" through the awareness and understanding that comes from confronting the legacy of racial injustice and white people's continuing role is supporting that inequality. For Sandra, if the world can be made a little bigger, they can "walk a little bit of that road" and take responsibility for challenging racism where they discover it.

In each of these participant's interviews, they describe the role of awareness in anti-racism education. Beyond awareness, however, is the related goal of accountability. Through the development of a racial consciousness these educators can raise the issue of accountability. Being accountable requires that white people understand how racism has shaped and influenced their lives. These educators suggest that anti-racism education demands of its participants to account for the ways in which they have benefited from racism and continue to benefit from its unearned privileges. The notion of accountability is raised in several of the interviews and provides important context for understanding the issues of awareness and action: how does one learn to be accountable if not through an enhanced understanding of history and behavior, and what is the impetus for taking action if not through understanding one's responsibility and being accountable?

Jane begins the framing of this idea of accountability as a goal in anti-racism education. In her interview, she talks about her own desire to hold others accountable but over time the goal has shifted to helping and supporting others in holding themselves

accountable. And further, that by taking responsibility, one becomes more empowered, has a greater sense of agency, and understands that her own liberation is tied in with being accountable. Jane explains it this way:

> …because of my own anger and internalized oppression issues, you know, it wasn't to make people feel bad, but I know that was a piece of it. "Look at what we've done," I really think that this is about people have to come at this place having more, not less, and that really getting whites to understand the liberation of dealing with their racism helps them be more of a human being, not less of a human being.

While the goal in anti-racism education might be related to accountability, the benefit of becoming more responsible is the opportunity to become more human – more authentic, more connected, more empowered.

Other interview participants raised the notion of accountability as an important goal in engaging in anti-racism education – not from the angle of one's own liberation but from the perspective that white people are responsible to people of color (as well as other whites) for the current racial inequality that exists. The goal from this angle is related to Jane's comment about "look at what we've done." Jackie and Tim raise this in their comments about the goals of anti-racism education. Jackie shared:

> Yeah, and we talk about, the students actually often ask questions about "well, what do I do, and how do I interrupt it, and what's my responsibility?" and some of them are in places where like "it's my responsibility to do it," and others are like, "I can only change myself, and I realize that I don't have to change the whole world" and kind of pushing them to think more broadly about what their impact on the world will be.

Further, Tim notes that in the group in which he is involved, the white participants are grappling with a series of group goals that include:

> Staying together is the first one. The balance between action and thought and analysis, and accountability to people of color, those three things. Those are all things that we are kind of grappling with.

In all three group-goals, participants' responsibilities to the group, to themselves, and to people of color serve to ground their anti-racism work. Tim explicitly highlights the concept of accountability to people of color as a primary task in their work. From Tim's perspective, having the goal of being accountable is important because it is too easy to be seduced into white fetishism and reifying the very dynamic that his group seeks to disrupt.

Heloise identifies accountability as an important goal in her teaching. In the interview, she related a story of taking some time to examine strategies that would support her goal of helping students take responsibility for their own learning and growth. Heloise cites:

> I had a sabbatical and on the sabbatical I kind of pulled back, and I thought "How can I get at the same ideas but in a way in which the students are going to take more ownership over figuring the ideas out rather than feeling like I'm just ramming something down their throat," which is what some of them were feeling.

Where the other educators cite the issue of accountability as a goal that facilitates participants doing something about racism, Heloise raises the goal of accountability in a different context. For her, the issue of accountability is situated within the context of taking ownership for one's learning or the intrapersonal dimensions of anti-racism education.

Developing a Vision of Social Justice

Another goal of anti-racism education that these educators offered is the goal of supporting participants in creating a vision of a racially (and socially) just world. It follows that if one of the goals is to enhance the level of awareness of racism, and another goal is to foster a sense of accountability, then a related goal is to develop a clear

understanding of what one ought to do and what it means for society if participants work toward a more racially just society. To do that, however, requires a sense of what is possible – a vision for the future that outlines what socially aware individuals are working toward.. The goal of having participants develop a vision for a racially just future was noted by a majority of the interview subjects. Illustrative of the perspectives regarding this goal for anti-racism education are Sandra and Heloise who offer that the development of a vision for a racially just future allows for students or participants to compare that future vision with the current reality; doing a type of gap analysis then sets up participants to determine strategies for intervening or addressing racism however they can.

Sandra suggests that part of developing a vision for the future is in understanding that the "world is bigger":

> I just want my students to leave the classroom and....my job is to make the world bigger than it was when they came in. All I want them to know is that it's a bigger place than they thought it was when they walked in the door, and for me, that's really, that's a success story.

Widening students' understanding of other peoples' lives creates new ways of thinking and knowing. In the process of widening students' perspective on the world, they have an opportunity to rethink what kind of world they want to live in, and what is required in order to create that kind of world. Sandra's goal for her anti-racism education – "a success story" – is expanding the circle of her students' understanding of the world around them. And if she can do that, even a little as she suggests, then her students have more of a grasp on the complexity and nuance of social justice work.

Understanding the complexity and nuances of addressing racism and whiteness is a primary task in the development of a vision of a racially just world. Brad offers that:

> I think we have to support each other into staying with the complexity and staying with not going to a place of, well, not worrying about the pessimism or optimism that's there, but going to a place of hope in the sense that we may not see how to do it, or when it's going to happen, but the kind of stubborn hope that if enough people stay with the complexity and stay with the work at the various levels of the system, and if we can do it in a way that continues, then we can start to make dents in it.

Brad acknowledges the challenges of doing this work, and the challenges of helping others understand their responsibility in creating a racially just world. A vision of the future is born of the "stubborn hope" to which Brad alludes, and that the ability to intervene or "make dents in it" comes from having a sense of hope that world can be different. Heloise notes this in her interview when she notes:

> I'm teaching multicultural curriculum design class right now, and what I want them to be able to do is to leave the class with, once we were talking about being a visionary pragmatist, which is the term that Patricia Hill Collins had written about, of being able to keep in front of you a vision of multicultural social justice paradigm that you may not be able to put all of it into practice, but you can at least push the edges in any context that you're working. You can figure out ways of pushing the edges, and envision something maybe better than what you can do right now.

So, whether it is "push the edges" or "make dents in" a racially unjust system, a vision for what one seeks to accomplish is an important goal of anti-racism educational efforts.

Developing Intervention Strategies

The last goal of engaging in anti-racism education these interview participants offered is the goal of equipping others to intervene in a racially unjust system. Many of the participants noted that engaging with workshop participants or students from their classes on what to do about racism once someone becomes aware of it, on understanding that they have a responsibility for creating a world that is just for all, and for considering what that world might look like means that they need to be equipped, both

psychologically and emotionally, on how to intervene when they believe racism is occurring. As was suggested above, the underlying reason for creating an awareness of racism or whiteness is so that something can be done to address it. Being responsible or accountable also implies that someone might think and behave in a certain way, and certainly, exploring different ways of being in the world is the precursor for actually doing differently in the world. Thus, the primary reason these anti-racism educators engage in their work is to support others in "doing something" about racism.

An important consideration in intervening in a racially unjust system is seeing or identifying it. This was an important theme that several interview participants noted when they spoke about the goals of anti-racism education and the task of intervening. Jackie, Tim, and Diana all speak to the importance of "seeing racism" as a diagnostic skill and as a precursor to intervening or interrupting racism. Jackie notes:

> I think one of the key concepts is knowing how to see it, you know, how to find it and see it, and name it, and make it visible. Because if you can't do that, you really can't interrupt it, or you won't be very effective at interrupting it. So, I think that's probably key and essential.

This notion of diagnosing the system in order to intervene is suggested by Diana when she offers:

> I mean you can't interrupt whiteness until you know that it exists. So, I think that's the goal of the courses that we teach, which is to get them to that place.

Tim also notes:

> Well, you first have to recognize how it's operating, when and how, in the moment and be prepared to interrupt it. We're so well trained not to do that that it's very hard to overcome. It's very scary because as white educators, we are interrupting our own culture and basically a culture is what gives us our support, so it's like burning our bridges, and if we don't have a support network to fall back on then we're in the middle of the bridge that we're burning, and we just fall into the river kind of thing.

In all three of these excerpts, intervening is the primary goal, but the first critical task is to identify and diagnose the social environment so that one can "interrupt racism." Identifying racism or recognizing "how it's operating" is different from gaining awareness of the breadth and depth of racism and whiteness noted above. Awareness of what racism is, how it manifests itself in individual behavior, cultural systems and institutions is one of the first goals of anti-racism education. Identifying racism to interrupt it goes beyond being "aware," as it calls attention to the assessment skills required in the intervention process. Jackie points to the development of such skills in the process of learning how to intervene or interrupt racism. She notes:

> I also think obviously having the skills to be able to interrupt it is pretty important. Questioning and engaging people in the process of questioning what it is. I think it all depends on the concept of the environment, there are ways to interrupt whiteness without saying, "Hey, this is whiteness. What are we doing here?"

On a different level, Jackie voiced an issue explicitly that a couple of other educators referenced. For Jackie, the task of knowing how to intervene is complicated. Questions arise: How does one do this? What is effective? What are the implications of my intervening? How can I prepare for this? Particularly if, as Tim suggests above, intervening can be tantamount to burning a bridge, the question of how to do this well becomes an important issue to consider. Jackie notes that she:

> Struggle[s] with teaching people how to interrupt whiteness in some ways because in some ways that feels empty as well because you can't anticipate who's going to be sitting at the table and what that's going to look like and what their responses are, and in some ways it's not an organic process or it doesn't feel as effective to me.

While acting to combat racism can be fraught with difficulty, as some of the participants noted, it is also the primary goal of anti-racism education. As Brad notes during his

interview, the framework of training (or goal of anti-racism training) is about what white people can *do* about racism:

> Well the framework, we're talking about the work with Judith Katz, the framework that we use is that one of what can white people do about racism, and if white people can get a handle around what white means and where it comes from and the fact that it's a made-up deal for our benefit, that's an IS, it's just the way things are, and it's hooked up with racism.

One of the interview participants suggested that the notion of putting effort and energy into "interrupting racism" might be displaced. Jane offered a counterpoint to others in the study when she said:

> I think, I was looking at the question about how do you interrupt whiteness? How do you interrupt blackness? I mean, I don't get it. I mean you can't interrupt your culture, you can be aware of it, you can understand it's *a* cultural system … not the only cultural system, but I don't have a goal. I want people to own that they are white, not move away from it. I want to say, you know, I have this time thing, I think a meeting starts "on time" when the clock hits 11 o'clock. That to me is on time, I understand other people have different notions that I'm going to have to understand and negotiate a way that my "on time" and your "on time" works for us. So, I don't think it's about interrupting it, I think it's about recognition, I think it's about being able to talk about it, I think it's about changing organizational structure so that the bandwidth is much wider, and that you're not deciding professional means a "white way" of approaching things, or communicating, or any of those things.

In this passage, Jane connects action with accountability. For her, the idea of "interrupting racism" is an impossible task because culture cannot be interrupted; however, if her participants understand racism and their role in perpetuating it, and they take ownership for their behavior, then taking action can take the form of changing or modifying systems, processes, and structure. One way of doing this is "getting everyone on the same side of the table." She explains:

> I see sometimes racism as … "it's out there," and the issue is getting us all on the same side of the table to fit the "it," instead of the notion that says that if you're white and if you're Latino, we're on different sides of the table. My goal is to get us on the same side of the table, to fight that "it" that has impacted most of our

> lives, and when people get it, it's a very exciting thing because it's not about making them feel bad about themselves.

While Jane takes issue with the notion of "interrupting racism," she concurs with the larger goal of taking action for racial justice – to "fight the 'it' that has impacted most of our lives." Increasing awareness and understanding of racism and whiteness, taking ownership for ones' thoughts and actions, identifying the vision and values that one wants to have to lead a congruent and authentic life, and taking action – both individually and collectively – to create and lead such a life are the goals of anti-racism education as articulated by these educators. Having explored the major themes related to their goals for anti-racism education, we now turn our attention to the *content* that supports such goals.

Content in Anti-racism Education

In the discussions about how anti-racism educators describe their teaching and their approach to their work, the topic of what content is included in their teaching came up regularly. Indeed, the *what* of their teaching was voiced in each interview. And there was remarkable consistency in their articulation of the various topics that they covered. Each of these educators explore the history of racism in the United States, to some degree, the privilege that arises for white people as a result of racism, and the way in which racism and whiteness is manifested within the individual, cultural, and systems levels of behavior and practice. Some of these educators also identified the aspect of violence that results from racism as a specific area for exploration, the concept of white identity development, and how racism is connected to other forms of oppression.

Different educators emphasize different aspects of racism and whiteness in their work, and each explored content that the others did not mention. For example, Liz emphasizes white privilege in her teaching and consulting work, and explores the production of knowledge in her research. Linda explores individual differences and preferences through the use of DISC technology, but then structures her examination of racism and whiteness through the exploration of DISC differences. (The DISC activity is a work style preference assessment.) While these educators may emphasize different aspects of racism or explore different elements of whiteness, each of them starts at the beginning: how did we get to this place. The history and legacy of racism in the United States anchors their work.

History of Racism in the United States

Exploring the history of racism is an important theme in the context cluster. White anti-racism educators noted that they think it is important to frame the discussion about racism and whiteness by pointing out various historical markers and events, such as Bacon's Rebellion, the Civil Rights era, *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954), or the Texaco discrimination lawsuit. Some of these educators indicated that they spend a great deal of time examining history, and others indicated that they cover a timeline in a brief fashion so that they can focus on the current context. However, most of these educators identified history as a fundamental component of what they cover because it helps to situate the task of addressing racism in contemporary society within a larger context.

Shelly illustrates the attention that these educators put into thinking through the challenges of teaching a vast amount of history to participants or students that may have very little prior knowledge:

> And, the historical, how the historical shapes today. So, you know, I came in with my focus wanting to be how can people get along across racial lines, whereas now my focus really is "how do we get these white kids to understand how hundreds of years of oppression have got to what we are today and where we are today" because I think they are completely blind to where we are today. I think they have a life experience as I do of everybody being treated equally on the surface, so to them, everybody's equal and so everybody's fine and so there's no problem.

Shelly makes a clear connection between exploring history and helping students rethink their assumptions about racial equality in contemporary society. Shelly, like many of these educators, spend significant time in their teaching covering the "hundreds of years of oppression" so that students or participants can get a handle on the dynamics of racism.

White Privilege

The concept of privilege is the second major theme within the content cluster. Like history, each of the educators spoke specifically about white privilege as a primary concept that is covered in what they teach. As Brad notes in his interview, one of the specific content areas he covers is privilege and how it operates: "One of them is privilege, naming it and getting clear about what it is and teasing it and staying in touch with it." Raising the issue of white privilege is not without difficulty, however. These educators note that most white people have difficulty in understanding how racism correlates with privilege. Liz notes in her own understanding of white privilege:

> So then I thought I had seen something very big, though very sickening, because it was moderately dizzying to imagine that I didn't deserve what I had, or hadn't

> earned all that I had. But my mind, I just said "there must be more where this comes from." I had seen something huge, I had access to the knowledge system in a way that my African American friends in this building didn't have. I had heard their story, pictures of the black women in this building, I had heard some of their stories and had some times felt when they were stories of discrimination, I sometimes felt "how awful for them," but I never felt how exempt for me, the reverse – that my ease was the compliment of their dis-ease. It corresponded to their dis-ease, and the two were interrelated.

Linda notes the challenge more directly when she notes:

> The dilemma about to talking to white people about their whiteness, if you haven't experienced you have no idea the freedom and the really good stuff that brings because it's nebulous.

So, the content around white privilege includes pointing out examples of privilege and the ways in which the system of racism keeps these privileges intact and beyond the awareness of white people.

Shelly raises the concept of the "merit ideology" as a facet of privilege. The ideology that an individual rises and falls according to their ability is an important assumption upon which privilege is able to continue. Like Linda, discussing the notion of white privilege is often met with resistance.

> So, here they have this ideology, and that's how I'm framing it, as a merit ideology that is ingrained within us for all of our lives. So if America is a place where we can work hard and succeed then how can racial discrimination exist? Because the contract for meritocracy says that the people are going to work hard, and at the same time then, the society needs to acknowledge that, and if you work hard, you're going to succeed. So, it's not who you are, but it's how hard you work, right? So then, racial equality must not exist because it couldn't exist in a meritocracy. So, I think for me, what I'm trying to examine, and I see this again and again in my students.... I will sit there, and I will say, "Here's all the stuff. Here's all the history. We do the history piece, then we do the "here's the situation today" in terms of the judicial system, our educational system, and so and so. And then I still get students who write in papers "well my father lost his father at age 16, and he had to support his whole family, and he pulled himself up without a college education, and we're doing fine, so why can't they?" They have examples of it in their lives, the American dream is for everyone, right? So there must not be racial discrimination, so I think there's this disconnect between the ideology of merit and the idea of racism as systemic.

For Shelly, raising the issue of white privilege is connected to the concept of a merit ideology. Shelly is asking students to reinterpret what they believe is success based on merit to success based on privilege. Her attempts to address the issue of white privilege is met with resistance because it creates a great deal of cognitive dissonance for students. It is counter to some of their fundamental assumptions about the way in which the world operates; therefore, it is easy to dismiss or reject the material.

Finding a way to engage students or participants in understanding a particular concept is a challenge, as Shelly notes above. While the *process* of teaching is described within the next cluster of themes, I raise the issue of resistance here because many of the educators with whom I spoke address resistance as a content issue as much as a process issue. The question is: how can the content be structured to manage or lessen resistance? Liz has reconsidered what she will offer or relate to her participants regarding the notion of privilege; the content of privilege is no longer an "out there" concept but something to which she speaks from an individual perspective. This is done to allow participants the opportunity to consider what she has said. The content of the privilege concept has been modified to meet certain goals (so that participants are more willing to join with her in reflecting on their own experience given what she has shared).

> I have found that that's the way that it works. If I will testify about my own particularity, it gives them the breathing space to look at their own lives. If I try to tell people about their lives, they would be up in arms because of the American ideology of individualism and hands off and mind your own business. But if I testify to my own, they can look sideways at me working on myself, thinking, not feeling, thinking.... They can look at me, a woman thinking about her white privilege, and then it gives them the space to look back at their own lives.

Racism and Whiteness in Behavior and Systems

A third content area that is explored in these educators work is the concept of levels of racism. Hardiman and Jackson (1997) describe the Social Oppression Matrix as consisting of three levels (individual, institutional, societal/cultural), two psycho-social processes (conscious and unconscious), and two modes of application (attitudinal and behavioral). Each of this study's white anti-racism educators utilizes some variation of this model to frame their work with students and participants. Most of them focus on the levels of oppression as a key concept. For a few educators, there is some segmentation that occurs in how they structure their content: consider individual level behaviors and attitudes, then cultural norms, and then institutional structures, practices, and policies. Others noted that it is important to provide information and perspective on all three levels and to blend them or work on them simultaneously if it is appropriate to do so. For example, Anderson raises this when he suggests:

> Another key concept is that the work happens simultaneously at the personal level, that's internal feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. The interpersonal level about the relationships between people, and the systemic change level, which could be the explicit or implicit stuff going on at the organizational level, and I know that one of the things that's influencing me is that I'm simultaneously thinking at all those levels, or moving in and out of them, and that said, I'm not interested in taking a position that says that institutional change is all that matters, or personal change is all that matters. For me, it's working all of them simultaneously, all those levels, so that we get people who really understand and are committed to the organizational changes that they want to make as opposed to making organizational changes and privately having a lot of resentment and backlash. Or, having people just change how they feel and think about something, but having no organizational change process that runs parallel to that. So, that about the simultaneous levels matters to me.

Just as he is working on all three levels, he is providing information and perspective to his audience about the way racism and whiteness manifests on these various levels so that participants can choose what and how they change.

The individual level of oppression is a significant component of these white anti-racism educators' instructional content. These educators cover issues such as internal dominance and subordination, individual beliefs and stereotyping, conscious and unconscious behaviors, and the rewards and punishments that accrue from supporting or challenging individual racist behaviors and attitudes. Anderson discussed the work of his consulting group and how their framework that exams individual behavior has helped him in his anti-racism teaching efforts:

> Then, the last thing that I'm thinking of is that there's a wonderful theory that Visions has worked on spinning out of the work of others, it's called Modern and Internalized Oppression Theory. It basically lays out five behaviors that members of dominant groups are likely to engage in, and five parallel behaviors that members of oppressed or targeted groups are likely to behave in.

Anderson uses this theoretical model to encourage participants to reflect on how they may have witnessed or participated in such behaviors. The model is both conceptual and grounded in tangible ways in which these behaviors manifest themselves. In this way, participants can have a more comprehensive understanding of how racism plays out at the individual level.

These educators explore how racism manifests at the organizational or institutional level. This aspect of the content is focused on the structure, policies, and practices of specific organizations (in the case of many of the consultants) or of institutions, such as government, education, and media . They may use a case study to illustrate how organizations systematically advantage some, while oppress others, or they may use a video that tracks two individuals from different racial backgrounds in their attempts to accomplish certain tasks, and from that video engage in a discussion about how institutions reinforce current ways of thinking and doing that results in the

propagation of whiteness. Whatever the method (which will be reviewed below), the content is focused on the systemic.

Shelly raises the importance of addressing the institutional level of racism when she notes:

> This whole idea that white students see racism, tend to come into our classrooms, see racism as at the individual level instead of at the systemic level, and so that became kind of a focal point for me and has become a big emphasis in my teaching about racism lately, the whole idea of how do we shift students from seeing racism as an individual bias, as you know well it's just these people not liking these people, to getting them to see the systemic nature of it, to see how it is infused in every aspect of our society - our institutions, our culture, everything.

She sees the examination of the organizational or institutional level of racism as a focal point in her teaching since so many students tend not to "see" the various forces that influence policies and practices. For her, it is important to go beyond the overt forms of racism that most students and participants are familiar with, and support them with new information aimed at expanding their awareness and understanding of how racism operates.

Another educator also cited the need to focus on the institutional level because of the tendency of people to think that racism operates at the individual level and that such overtly racist behavior is relegated to a small class of white people. David notes:

> But, most importantly, if I can do anything, it's getting people beyond thinking about these issues just as individual interactions and trying to get a sense of the institutional, especially for teachers - I think it's so important for them to have an understanding about the context in which they work, you know, I hear teachers say, sort of like to blame parents for a lot of things, like here there's sort of a growing Latino community and a growing Hmong community, and they'll say things like, "These parents just don't care about education. They don't come to any meetings" and to get them to think institutionally...like first of all, some of the parents they're referring to are working two or three jobs. They can barely afford to put food on the table the next day, much less get childcare so they can come to us, and you know a lot of parents in a community where a school might be 75% students of color and 75% white teachers, and the parents might not feel any more

> comfortable or safe in that school than their kids do. So, to get them to think more institutionally, to think about systems and structures of oppression, and one of the ways that I understand it is that any individual instances of racism or sexism, or any of these issues, I try to understand them as just symptoms of something that's more institutional and systemic, that if the systems and institutions weren't in place, there would be no reason for individual instances like that to happen, and to try and get them to shift into thinking of racism not just in terms of burning crosses and racist language, to thinking about structures of opportunity and those kinds of things.

The cultural level is the third level that these educators include in their design or curriculum. The cultural level centers on the way in which whiteness operates as a norm in society and influences symbols, holidays, language, dress, music, art, and all the other dimensions in which culture operates. While these educators talked about the importance of examining this aspect of how racism is manifested, several also spoke to the challenges of exploring the role of cultural racism. Shelly offers:

> The third level, which I think is the hardest to teach about, and I'm still working on how best to do that, is the cultural level, trying to get them to see how embedded our culture is with white as the norm, and I still don't know how to do that best, other than I try to focus on the whole white privilege thing and how society favors white norms of speech and dress, and tradition, and family style - all that stuff.

Shelly notes that the embeddedness of white culture makes it challenging to identify and isolate. Tim problematizes the challenge this way:

> So, when you're the dominant culture, you don't really, again it's a matter of tools and perspective, your culture just works for you all the time, and so you can ignore it and act as if it's not there and say things such as well, I don't have a culture, everybody else does, or see it as bland and see other people's culture as exotic, things like that. So, just understanding the culture and locating it within racial hierarchy, those two tasks are tremendously difficult, but they're also tremendously rich and complex

Thus, the challenge is to provide enough helpful information and perspective so that participants understand the nature of cultural racism. Jane cites the importance of linking

the cultural level of racism with the other two levels of racism as well as seeing culture as an interconnected system that impacts how organizations and individuals behave:

> When I first started....if I look at white awareness, the first version, I had inklings about culture which we'll come to, I know, again. I understand white culture much more now. And, really understand the kind of roots and tentacles of how it held a stranglehold on organizations and individuals; and what had been implicit is now much more explicit for me because I can see it so clearly as a system as opposed to kind of knowing it was there, but not knowing what that all meant.

All three concepts: the individual level, the organizational or institutional level, and the cultural level are important content areas for these white anti-racism educators in their teaching efforts. This model provides a useful way for analyzing information that students or participants explore.

Like the Levels of Oppression, the notion of "useful models" came up several times when discussing the content aspect of anti-racism education. Models or frameworks provide a sense of structure within which students or participants can examine and analyze new or different data. Models provide the important content from which cognitive dissonance can emerge. Jane offers:

> I like to present new models. One of the things that I think is critical is presenting models around which people can engage so we don't have the same old stupid conversations. What I think is the most lethal training is just putting people in a room together and talking.

Variety of content engages the intellect, rather than just engaging in the "same old stupid conversations." New approaches and new ways of thinking help to illuminate and illustrate points. They provide a context from which participants can engage in a different conversation. Jane continues:

> You know, whether it's Bailey's [Jackson] model on multicultural OD in the past, whether it's the five ways that racism occurs, whether it's something on institutional racism, talking, we have a model where we talk about the boulder [the challenge in confronting racism at an organizational level]. It's giving people

> a way to engage that isn't just about whatever comes to mind, that you're just explaining differences.

It can also bring in a different perspective or voice into the room, as Heloise explains:

> Occasionally students will ask if I can spend more time presenting to them, and I try to, I guess when I present stuff to students, a lot of times what I'm presenting are, it maybe conceptual frameworks that they will then spend time using, it may be taking an issue and presenting a point of view that isn't present in the class.

Models such as Modern Racism, the Levels and Types of Oppression or Racial/Social Identity Development support these educators in providing information and perspective that is clear, concise, and helpful in understanding the dynamics of racism. And while each of these anti-racism educators have his or her favorite models and concepts to present, none of them indicated that such content represented "truth" or the only way to provide an audience information about racism. Indeed, Sandra cautioned:

> I do find that people get wedded to this [social justice] model in a way that seems to me to be artificial and kind of training oriented, and what I don't like about it is that I think it silences people who are from traditionally over-represented groups in a way that doesn't lead to cross-group communication and understanding.

For Sandra, like most of the other anti-racism educators, the value of such models lies in their explanatory power. New ways of thinking about familiar issues help to support the kind of cognitive dissonance that moves these participants and students toward the larger goals of awareness and action.

Process in Anti-racism Education

Another set of themes that came from how these anti-racism educators describes their teaching and approach to their work is the *process* through which they structure the learning environment. Several methods for engaging students or participants were offered. These methods include variations of experiential learning, writing and research,

community-based involvement, skill building, discussions or dialogues, and reading and reflection. While these educators noted that part of what they do is didactic (presenting information, theories, and concepts), the balance of the learning environment is structured so that participants can learn from one another or other learning aids, such as videos, panels, or games. These educators most often cited "experiential learning" as their preferred process method, and experiential for them means "learning by doing." Such things as discussions, role-playing, coaching clinics, and project-team based work were often mentioned as the kinds of processes used within an experiential context to support participants' learning.

When asked to describe their teaching, these white anti-racism educators spent more of the interview time discussing *how* they worked with participants to achieve the learning goals rather than *what* was covered (the content aspect described above). Almost twice as much airtime was given to the process of engaging participants as what they were engaged in. Perhaps the issue is that the content or what should be covered is clearer than knowing how best to cover it. Or perhaps it is a reflection of how these educators themselves entered into understanding racism and their own struggle with the content, as Jackie notes:

> I think about my own fear about entering into race, and a lot of the white students were just silent, and … subsequently they were checked out and didn't push themselves and challenge themselves, they couldn't find a voice, and now in this kind of new way of thinking about our models and thinking critically and engaging the students about not necessarily moving them from the topics that you know are going to get them there, but actually engaging deeply in the struggle about what does this all mean, and how does it play out, and how does it impact people.

As a result, a lot of time and attention is invested in thinking through how to engage participants and have them think critically about racism. Sandra suggests:

> I spend a lot of time trying to think about meaningful experiences for students to have, and they say that it's a lot of work, but there's no tests, no quizzes, nothing like that in my class.

Given the significant investment of time in attending to process issues, this theme cluster stands out as important in understanding how white anti-racism educators approach their work. Therefore, I will return to this notion of "process orientation" when discussing how whiteness informs the work of these educators in Chapter Five.

Several of the white educators I spoke with teach at a college or university, and much of how they described their approach to teaching was similar. This approach has an emphasis on reading and reflection, and demonstrating an understanding of the material that is covered over the course of a quarter or semester. Diana sums up the approach well:

> Well, you have them read things, and you have them talk about them. That's one thing. So, some of it is gaining knowledge about who has been writing about and thinking about these things? And, you know, there's barely a soul that exists in U.S. society for whom race is not an issue. I mean, we live in a racially charged country, society, and whether you choose to recognize it or not, race affects you every day. So, the idea is to sort of cue into that and see it. A lot of it is academic - reading, reflecting, questioning the reading, and then talking about how it affects you. If there are particular misconceptions, we let them sit there for a little while and see whether someone else is going to tap into it, which often times they do; and if not, we'll point them out so we're not just passive players here, but we're co-learners, but we also know more than they do, and because we know more, then we have a moral responsibility to sort of say, "What about this...?" I think it's a regular academic exercise - you read, you write, you think, you talk - and we do that stuff.

While the work is process focused – questioning, reflecting, challenging, and supporting students – Diana notes that it is also "a regular academic exercise." The learning goals, from an educator's perspective, are similar whether it is an educator in a university or an educator in a consulting firm, but the process is different. A different example, from a consulting context, is Anderson's work with leaders from a large organization:

> So what that means is it's process work, for example, we recently did a meeting….for about the last six to nine months in a particular organization, I and some colleagues have been facilitating support groups for people of color, women, white men, managers of people of color – those four groups. Then, just last week, each of those groups made a report to the vice presidents and the president at an off-site, all-day meeting. In preparation for that meeting, I met with each of the vice presidents for about an hour and interviewed them to get a sense of what they're seeing are the issues. Based on all of that, I see our role as helping the white male VPs hear what white women and people of color are experiencing, make some sense out of it, and then collectively as a group decide where they want to go next. And, to be working with each of the vice presidents individually and as a group about what's hard for them to hear in this, what are they ready to do, what are they not ready to do, and walking with them on that journey; as opposed to saying. "You should do this. You should do this. You have to do this, etc."

In this excerpt, there is an explicit process goal of working with both the individual and group. While the group ceases to exist after the quarter or semester in a college classroom, the group will continue to operate once the consultant leaves; therefore, the process of structuring the learning environment is subtly influenced by this assumption. Moreover, college students need to demonstrate some degree of mastery around specific content, where these vice presidents need to demonstrate some ability to work together (and with their colleagues) differently. These subtle variations were raised throughout the interviews and represent one of the few areas where the differences in the interview subject's background and occupation is apparent.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is the key approach for these anti-racism educators in structuring the learning experience. As noted above, educators invest a lot of time thinking about how to structure the learning process so that participants can "learn from doing." The typical process that these educators discussed was engaging in some activity.

reflecting on that experience, and discussing the experience with their colleagues/peers. Heloise cites:

> So, what we more do is structure in places… structure and a whole lot of interaction in various courses in the program, and to try to have it be interaction about issues related to social justice and oppression kind of around a variety of issues, around language, or around race, or around gender, or around social class, or sexual orientation, and how students do kind of processing with each other.

The focus of "processing with each other" that Heloise notes is reflected in how other educators approach experiential learning. For example, Brad affirms:

> And, mainly what we'll be doing in diversity practitioners certificate program is teaching, but not teaching in the sense of "I'm up here, you're down there" to student, but collegial - experiential.

The shift in learning from experience and with one another is different from the formal presenting or lecturing style with which many of these participants are familiar. On some level, processing with others is a skill to be learned; Brad adds that there is "a lot of skill building involved." But there is a clear intent to structure this process as Heloise highlights:

> So, there's a lot of student/student interactions in which people are talking about their experiences and stuff, so students aren't just getting it either all from me or from the readings, or at least with the community-based field experience, they are getting it person-to-person out in the field. But, they are also getting it from their colleagues.

While educators articulated a clear preference for structuring the learning process using experiential learning activities, Diana acknowledged that there is the potential that learning goals can be disrupted by focusing too much on 'learning by doing.' The issue comes when the process "takes over" the content:

> I think my classes are more experiential, activity-based, learn things by doing them. And, [my co-teacher] and I last year did a lot of activities and had them doing this and that, playing this game, doing lots of activities. We had so many activities we lost the content, I feel like. What we're doing this year is more inner

> circle talking about the topic. We do an activity here and there, or a video here and there, as a stimulus to bring us to a particular place of questioning and interrogating, but the activity is not the end-all learning exchange in itself.

Happily, this was not a trend in the interviews. While providing activities-based learning can be a seductive process because participants seem engaged, most of the educators I interviewed talked about the importance of structuring the process in service of the overall learning goals.

Research and Community-based Learning

Beyond experiential learning, many educators in the college and university environment used a variety of research, project-based, and community-based learning processes to achieve course goals. Illustrative of these educators, Heloise uses a variety of these methods to achieve class objectives. In identifying racism through a textbook analysis, for example, students are able to see how whiteness manifests itself at a normative but covert level. Even students of color that may be more attuned to such messaging, note the obvious differences in how white people and people of color are treated in media and print materials:

> Another thing I always do, actually I do it in California and I did it in Wisconsin, is a textbook analysis where I have them [students] go through and count...they did this as a class last week, for everybody, almost everybody, that's a real eye opener. Even for the students of color, it's like "whoa, my folks did it this way, but it's more this way than I realized it was."

Heloise asks students to engage in other forms of research to get a better understanding of how racism operates at the cultural and institutional level. Doing research on a specific topic, for example, can provide students with an opportunity to discover the challenges of uncovering material related to racism and the cultures of various peoples of color as well

as how different people perceive the world. Heloise describes this activity in a multicultural education course and how she structures this kind of opportunity:

> They're going to have to plan the units, they're going to have to do some content research about whatever the topic is they're going to be teaching, using work in ethnic studies or women's studies, or just the sort of...they have to identify a main idea that they're going to be developing their unit around and then do some content research from the perspective of the intellectual work of at least one historically marginalized group whose knowledge base they are not strong in. I mean, all of them can think of several groups whose knowledge base they're not strong in.

The learning process – doing some content research in a subject area students are unfamiliar with – provides an important opportunity to explore the way in which oppression operates. It also brings a different voice into the course experience for these students, as they are exposed to new ways of thinking and seeing the world.

Another process method that Heloise uses in her course (that other educators noted as well) is having students go out into the community and interact with people different from themselves. Heloise believes that there is power in learning about differences through cross-race relationships, such as through a community-based learning project; it is also another way to bring in different voices into the course. Heloise explains:

> And, then the other course I taught was more of a multicultural education methods course, but it had a community-based field experience, which was also part of the state teacher education legislation, and students were supposed to have a 50-hour field experience and the state didn't say it had to be in the community, but a 50-hour field experience working with somebody different from themselves. I started off having a mixture of placements in schools and in communities, and just watching what students were getting out of it, I realized that they were more likely to have a more profound learning experience if I got them out of school, into communities where they had contact with adults from a racial background different from themselves, which most of them were white, so that would be primarily African American or Latino adult.

Other educators discussed the value of learning from cross-race relationships, such as through peer-projects and dialogues; however, many of the educators that teach multicultural education courses used the student-teacher internships as opportunities to learning about power and differences (much like Heloise does in the example above). Structuring the learning process for students through requiring intentional interaction with people different than themselves serves to achieve the goals of anti-racism education (such as awareness and action).

Learning through Dialogue

The use of "dialogue" is a prevalent theme among these anti-racism educators. As a learning tool, it creates a container for participants to engage with one another, learn from one another, and, through reflection, learn about themselves. Giving them an opportunity to engage with material that is highly personal and reflect on it provides a new angle for participants. Diana notes:

> I think that works really well for college students. They are sort of curious, psychologically curious, searching for identity, that's the quest of the college years, and you know a lot of students are looking for their sexual identity, people are searching for their racial identity, so it gives them a cause to grab onto, coming to know themselves as white people is another form of identity that they haven't thought about.

Within a dialogue, they can come to know themselves better through intentionally interacting with others from differing cultures and points of view. Awareness evolves, understanding deepens, and racial identity shifts through the active engagement in conversations that matter. This is a particularly powerful method, given the peer influence that is created through these kinds of interactions; further, participants are respected as "knowers" in this type of learning process – each has something to

contribute to the whole. Sandra believes that this kind of learning process supports the kind of change in students that is identified in anti-racism goals:

> I think that's the case [students are transformed] because I'm getting better at engaging the full range of students that come into the classroom, and I'm trying to do that in a way that's increasingly dialogic so that's happening more and more, I would say.

White anti-racism educators note that the dialogue method also poses some challenges. For example, there is the challenge of engaging in a process that (for some white people) is radically different from how they were raised, as Sandra notes:

> You know I'm trained for hierarchy just like everybody else, so I work really hard to become more and more dialogic, and then what makes that even harder is that students are trained for hierarchy so they're not always 100% comfortable with that.

The process is inherently flat in a dialogue. Power is shared among those present in the dialogue. As a learning technique, it can be disconcerting and somewhat difficult to feel comfortable with in the beginning. Also, if the dialogue is cross-cultural, another challenge might be the reluctance of people to engage in open and honest conversation about difficult topics. Anderson framed it this way:

> There is a way, this is very difficult, but there is a way clearly that I think it's easier to do certain types of work around racism, better yet, have certain kinds of frank discussions if it's only white people in the room. That said, it can be very difficult to get a group of white people together to talk about racism, because we will often say we need people of color in the room to educate us, and we really don't know anything, and why would a group of white people get together and talk? So, there's often some cajoling and pushing I have to do on that in order to get us to get together and talk, but that said, I might say, "You know, we all know that stereotypes are just stereotypes, and they don't apply to everybody. That said, what are some of your observations? If you were to be really honest about this, what are some of the observations you make sometimes between men and women, for example, or between white people and Latinos?" Just to get them talking about it, so that they don't get caught in thinking that stereotyping is a bad thing, and therefore you should never even notice you're doing it. The goal of this is to not have any stereotypes or biases. My thinking is that it ain't gonna happen in this lifetime, so the alternative is "let's get them on the table." Now, that is a

> part that's profoundly influenced by my Buddhist practice. Buddhism says in some ways "Look at what is, not pushing it away, not clinging to it, just noticing it for what it is," and I understand that to mean, in the context of bias, notice that you have biases and examine them, which is scary for some people who have been taught that, and think that, you're not supposed to be biased and to be biased is a bad thing. I don't think it's a bad thing, I just think it *is*.

The power of honest conversations, however, whether through dialogue or through other means can have a significant impact on participants' learning. In the excerpt above, Anderson notes the value of getting issues "on the table" and out into the open where they can be noticed, reflected on, and addressed. Anderson does not label the data as "bad" or "good," and the creation of a learning environment, in this manner, provides learners a sense of safety. David, in a different context, raises this same dynamic. He notes the power of listening as a fundamental skill developed through the learning process, and the ability to listen and suspend judgment creates space for other people to join in the conversation. David provides an example from the last day of one of his classes:

> And the last day of class, we went around and everyone talked about what's one thing that you'll remember that you got out of this class, whether it's something that someone said in class, or whatever. And, it gets to her, and you know, I could see people tense up like "oh, gosh, what is she going to say?" And she said that she recognized that her views in this class were different from most of the other people in class, and that she has a lot of attitudes that she'll probably always have, but she said the one thing she learned out of this class is that she learned how to listen, she never knew how to listen before.

Through the process of dialogue, participants learn new ways of seeing the world and new skills for exploring and understanding that world. Listening, as a skill that is developed, was named by several white educators. One noted that it is a powerful experience when a white student or participant finally "hears" the voices of his or her peers who are people of color. Although the notion of "listening" as a skill that is

developed can be rightly noted as a content issue, listening by these students and participants is a real process skill as David identifies above.

The process of how these white anti-racist educators do their work is highly relationship based. As noted above, it is accomplished through interaction, reflection, and dialogue. Relationships are formed or deepened, and trust, at both the interpersonal and group levels, is enhanced. This approach to education is substantively different from more traditional methods of teaching, such as presenting or lecturing or corporate training that includes presenting information, clarification of key concepts and issues, and application of those concepts to a work or organizational project. On some level, the process of anti-racism education is part of the content itself, and these white anti-racism educators all named an awareness of that dynamic.

Personal Style

The final set of themes that emerged from the interviews regarding how anti-racism educators describe their teaching and their approach to their work is how they conceive of their *personal style*. Each of these educators offered information about how they think of themselves as educators: their attitudes, behaviors, and teaching preferences. Initially this theme cluster was focused on educator self-concept, but the information and stories they shared was broader than that. Certainly, different themes such as use-of-self as a role model and teaching with humility emerged that more directly connect with these educators' sense of themselves – an identity as a white anti-racist educator. However, in reviewing the transcripts, many of these educators talked about personal preferences in their teaching style, and this idea is substantively different from

how they choose to structure the process of a learning event. For example, one of the educators offered that they are not as comfortable lecturing as they are in facilitating. While this personal preference informs the process choices of this educator, it also reveals something very important about the educator herself. For her, it is more important to be seen as a "guide on the side" rather than a "sage on the stage." Her personal style as an educator is revealed by how she thinks about the role of a white anti-racist as well as how she thinks about herself as an educator.

These educators raised four main themes within this theme cluster. First, the majority views their role as a facilitator of learning. This notion of facilitator fits with their preference for raising questions and engaging in discussion rather than lecturing. Secondly, they believe that it is critical to role model the behavior that they are seeking from the students or participants. Third, they feel that it is vital to challenge assumptions and behaviors that are racist or reinforce white normative cultural values. And finally, all of the educators believe strongly that it is important for white people involved in this work to remain humble. The following excerpts from these interviews address these four themes.

Facilitator of Learning

Sandra shares a story that I present here in its entirety because I think it points to several of the key issues that these educators raised in answer to my questions about educator approach and style. Sandra's story highlights the preference for raising questions, challenging assumptions and role modeling curiosity and support.

> I saw this [how educators' reinforce power dynamics] manifest a couple of semesters ago with this project that we're working on where this white guy was

really having a hard time with the stories that women and people of color were telling about things that had happened to them personally. They were individual stories, but they weren't being told just as individual stories, they were being told as stories representative of the way we walk in the world as women, as people of color. He was very sensitive to the individual experience that people were having, but he's an anthropologist and has lived all over the world, often he's been the only white person in communities of color as a researcher, as an anthropologist. He is interracially married, he has bi-racial kids, and yet he doesn't get the institutional level at all, and so constantly what was happening was that there was this tension emerging where he was saying...he was being very thoughtful about saying things like "Michael, I'm really sorry that that happened to you" and he was very thoughtful about that, but he would completely ignore the fact that the story you were telling was supposed to represent you in terms of your racial identity or your class identity, or your gender identity as a woman, as a person of color, as a working-class person, and this tension just grew and grew and grew and he became resistant, more and more resistant, because people were silencing him because everybody kept trying to tell more stories to get him to get it. And he just wasn't going to get it, and what I realized in that moment, which is why I like intergroup dialog as a form of pedagogy, was that nobody was asking the question, and so finally at one point I finally asked the question. Instead of silencing him, I said this is what I'm observing, can I just explain this dynamic? And I said, can you talk to me about why it....first I said, is that accurate, is it true that you're not seeing this as a part of a group experience, right, or as an identity experience? And he said, "Yes." And I said, "Well can you explain why that is, why you don't make the connection to the group." It was interesting because when I did that, I was not silencing him, but then of course, people thought I was picking on him, which I thought was really interesting because I was trying to bring him back into the conversation, and other people were more comfortable silencing him because they felt that was kinder because they were reinforcing this kind of what I think is a more traditional social justice model. That was for me like another turning point for me in relationship to this social justice work and that is that I'm really trying now to turn it around and not silence people who present perspectives that challenge kind of power privilege dynamics, not to let them get away with it, or to reinforce their privilege, but just to bring them back into a conversation in a way that doesn't necessarily silence them, however it is that that model silences, it does.

In the story that Sandra relates, she notes that several people had offered personal stories that were trying to convey a certain point that the white man was failing to understand. As a result of their attempts to try to help him to understand, the result was that he was becoming more resistant. Sandra notices that the white man's behavior is becoming more entrenched and defensive, so she names her observation of the "here and

now." While she is challenging the white man to "move outside of himself," she does so in a supportive and genuine way. She is trying to understand the world as the man sees it first before asking him to reconsider what he is missing. Moreover, Sandra is challenging the status quo of educators who reinforce traditional notions of learning through authority (in this case the use of information to silence). The challenging of assumptions occurs at multiple levels in this story, and she uses the dialogue as a way to raise questions and to intervene in the group dynamic.

Raising questions and facilitating discussion is a common theme in how these white anti-racists view their educator role. Several of them view it as a role with which they are becoming increasingly comfortable over time. As Shelly relates, she believes she has always been a strong presenter and comfortable sharing information. Recently, she is discovering that this work has also enhanced her facilitation skills:

> I think I'm a better facilitator now. I think I've always been a strong presenter, but I'm getting to be a better facilitator. So because of that, I guess my style has changed because I'll spend more time in a large group discussion, for example, because I feel more confident in my abilities to manage that discussion as opposed to me presenting. Because I can present, and I can even be pretty entertaining while presenting, but the value is in them talking. So, my style has changed because now I'm more willing to let the group interact, I'm not as scared of what might happen.

Shelly notes that part of this shift in her style is because she believes she can "manage the discussion" better and not be as afraid of "what might happen" if the discussion is open and dynamic rather than overly structured or non-existent. Shelly has come to appreciate that she can support the learning process if she knows how students are receiving and processing the information.

Sandra relates a similar transformation from trying to overly control the learning environment to believing that she can facilitate learning:

> I think that as I get older the need that I had back in college [to value the hierarchical teacher-student relationship] has diminished, so I'm no longer, I don't have to deal with that quite as much as I used to, to control the temptation rate of *telling* instead of *showing*.

Shelly, Sandra, and others highlight an important transformation in their own self-confidence in being a white anti-racist educator as well as a shift in personal preference in educator style. As these examples point out, one's teaching style is reflective of one's sense of self or identity as an anti-racist educator.

Other interview participants also named their preference for facilitating as their teaching style. While the issue of educator confidence is less apparent in these excerpts, they also highlight their sense of their approach as one of focusing on facilitation rather than presenting and that this approach is aligned with how they wish to "show up" as an educator. They also note that they have assumed this approach more so over time. Jackie offers:

> I have information and I have ways of thinking about this that I can share, that I can facilitate a process, I can engage other people in thinking about it from my perspective, or ask the questions, or provide resources or materials in order to engage in that, but I don't necessarily have the answers. I have thoughts about it, and observations, and I think critically about it, but how I do the anti-racist work now is really much more grounded as a facilitator but also as a part of my own journey and process in understanding and thinking about it.

Heloise also notes that while she has a clear preference for facilitating, she has become more adept at it over time:

> Well, I'm actually not really comfortable giving lots of lectures anyway, so to sort of pull back from a lecture teaching style and have it be more of engaging students in various kinds of projects is actually more comfortable for me than standing up and trying to be the big "sage on the stage." Again, that's regardless of what I'm teaching, and so I think my teaching style has become more process-based.

In all of these excerpts, the educators discuss that their teaching style has evolved over time, and that it has become increasingly facilitative. In fact, most of these educators have become so comfortable using their facilitation skills and connect their identity as white anti-racist educators with a facilitative approach that several noted that they are quite conscious when they step away from that approach, as Anderson notes:

> I'd like to think that my teaching is less preachy, or if it is, I'm very conscious of it and I'll say it. I'll say, "Look, there's something I want to say here and I'm really just going to preach this, so give me 30 seconds to preach it, and then I can let go of it."

This was such a common theme across the interviews that it appears as if effectiveness as a white anti-racist educator is linked with one's ability to surface critical issues within a group dialogue and use the group experience as one of the texts for learning about racism and whiteness. These educators noted, however, that role modeling, challenging appropriately, and having a sense of humility are also important characteristics of an anti-racist educator's persona.

Role Model

Role modeling is a theme that emerged in the interviews. Several of these educators discussed the importance of being authentic with students and participants and using the successes and challenges of their own journey to connect and inform. The power of self-disclosure was a common element in participant's discussion about role modeling. These educators believe that appropriately disclosing information about their own journeys can support the development of the students/participants and the group because it creates a "safe container" in which such disclosure invites the other person to share their own thoughts and feelings. Trust deepens, relationships are enhanced, and

learning occurs. Such self-disclosure normalizes the learning process and educators are seen as more "real" and "accessible" through such self-disclosure.

Liz underscores the importance of telling one's own story as an educator as a way to facilitate awareness and understanding. Liz noted that in her workshops, she tells her own story of coming to understand the white privilege she possesses. She believes that by role-modeling this kind of self-awareness and reflection, others may participate in their own critical self-reflection. Liz offers:

> If I will testify about my own particularity, it gives them the breathing space to look at their own lives. If I try to tell people about their lives, they would be up in arms because of the American ideology of individualism and hands off and mind your own business. But if I testify to my own, they can look sideways at me working on myself, thinking, not feeling, thinking…they can look at me, a woman thinking about her white privilege, and then it gives them the space to look back at their own lives.

Like Liz, Brad notes that role-modeling self-disclosure and openness to being vulnerable supports others in their own learning. Although, he offers, it is not always an easy process:

> I'm getting more selective, more conscious about how I'm using myself with people around my emotions, my experiences, my sharing experience. One of the ways I use myself is disclosing what's going on inside myself because I think, and I work hard at it. I have to work hard at it because it goes real fast, but I think we have a lot of support as white men not to share what's going on inside ourselves.

Brad notes that he has become more careful about what he shares and when he shares it, but that it is important – particularly for white men – because being open and self-disclosing may not be a familiar way of relating.

Role modeling appropriate self-disclosure can have a positive impact on people of color as well as white people. For some people of color, having white anti-racist educators discuss the challenges and successes of their own journey may be a new or

different experience. In my interview with Shelly, she discussed the importance of being authentic and honest with students, and that self-disclosing her own journey has been an important source of insight for students. The result of such sharing is that students not only see her journey but also ultimately see her commitment to being anti-racist. Shelly offers:

> I think that that has been a good thing for students. I think from white students who have written to me and told me things like, "It means a lot to me that you're a white person, and you care so much about this"... because even though we talk about the four "isms," they still usually focus on racism. That's still the one that often, depending on their own identity...some of them, one of the other isms may be really, really significant for them. But, oftentimes it still focuses on that. So, a lot of white students talk about that. I'm also connected to a lot of students of color who have said to me, "You're the first white person," and this is really sad, that "you're the first white person that I've met that cares so much about the topic of racism."

Such a take-away message reinforces the key learning goals of accountability/responsibility and joining with others in working for social justice described above. Thus, self-disclosure is an important behavior in a white anti-racist educator's efforts at role modeling.

Several of the educators noted that challenging and intervening appropriately is another important aspect of role modeling. Beyond self-disclosure, challenging assumptions and misinformation is a useful way for students and participants in understanding how to critically address racist behaviors in their own lives. Confronting behavior and challenging assumptions is, to some degree, the point at which anti-racist ideology becomes real and tangible: words turn into action. Thus, using these skills is an important aspect of an anti-racist educator's role. And it goes beyond using these skills in the group to helping others learn these skills.

Challenging Assumptions and Behaviors

These educators also talked about challenging assumptions and confronting behaviors from a very personal perspective that was not necessarily about role modeling with students or participants, but about the way in which they wanted to "show up" as educators. Beyond using these skills as ways to instruct, most believe that it is important to use these skills because that is what an effective anti-racist educator simply does. What "effectiveness" looks like or how it manifests itself is different depending upon the educator. Some believe that it is important to just name the behavior or dynamic, while others ask for permission to raise an issue. Some of them believe that conflict is an indicator that engaged learning is occurring, while others – although they too think conflict can be healthy – are less interested in dealing with participants' disruptive behaviors that are not really focused on the topic at hand and will confront them in a different way. Thus, how an educator challenges assumptions and confronts behaviors varies depending upon the educator. The common element across all of these educators is the belief that this is an important part of their teaching style.

Naming the dynamic or behavior is one way of challenging assumptions or behaviors that some of these educators use in their work. Jane provides an example where she simply describes a potential reality for some of the participants and invites them to reconsider their behavior (physically staying and psychologically opting out), and choose a different behavior (so that the person is both physically and psychologically aligned). It is a form of confrontation, and while it has important instructive value, it is also very much about her own preference as an educator to be with a group that wants to be engaged. Jane notes:

> I mean I've been in situations and sessions where I've said to people, when they had to be there mandatorily, like, "If you don't want to be here, please leave" because you're going to ruin it for us. Or, "If you can join us in some way to at least see what you can get out of the day." But, at least acknowledging that some people are there who don't want to be. It's like "don't waste my time." Really, life is too short. And my goal is not to get over your resistance. That's not my goal in life.

In this excerpt Jane highlights the notion of "choice" and that participants have a choice – even if it is "mandatory" – to choose a different behavior or attitude. She also is very conscious and clear about the goal in naming or acknowledging the dynamic is to not have the behavior disrupt her work in the group. It is both a personal goal as an educator, as she notes, and an educational goal so that the group can properly deal with the explicit learning goals and not have to manage or negotiate someone's behavior during the learning event.

Naming what is happening intrapersonally for the educator is another way in which an educator can confront attitudes or behaviors. In this example, Brad suggests that what is important is that he stay "grounded in the present" and speak from his own perspective about how he is experiencing the group or a member of the group. He offers:

> Let me come at that indirectly, because something else is in my mind just in terms of my style. I know Judith Katz in counseling me when I first started working with her, she used to say "[Brad], why are you so angry that you just scare white people all over the place?" And, I think that I probably did. My style was very provocative as opposed to evocative, and I can get in touch with real things and the kind of violence that we white people and we men do in this world out of our unconscious. I think a lot of the time it's not intended, it's not conscious. And so, I think I'm probably moving more toward being evocative, but if I'm experiencing anger, I try to be more selective about it now, but I do talk about that in the work that I do with people, either us as a group or my experiences that are personal.

Brad's style, as he notes above, has become more evocative over time rather than using his anger or other feelings in a provocative way. And although he is more selective now,

he still acknowledges his feelings, and he talks about his own emotional journey as a way to confront other white people.

David also discussed having a similar experience to Brad's – that of using his feelings and experience as a way of challenging others. Note, however, that where Brad used to be "provocative" because of his personal struggles and their attendant feelings, David wonders whether he might be too provocative and that it is really a function of his own internal struggle; therefore, David is now raising some of the questions regarding his teaching style and approach that Brad at one point had raised:

> I've become more confrontational, I've become more transparent in my own thinking. This multicultural class where I got a lot of my mentoring, the approach was sort of "everybody is where they are with these different issues, and we need to appreciate that," and at the time I probably didn't think this, but later as I found myself doing that, I felt like I was letting people off the hook too much. Now, if somebody says something in class that I think is sexist, or racist, I will say "what you just said is sexist," which doesn't always go over very well, but it's a point of departure for a new dialogue about whatever was just said. I used to be more coddling I think, and I'm not necessarily saying that this teaching style has improved for the better necessarily, I think sometimes I might be too confrontational. I think sometimes some of it is about me struggling with my own demons and taking it out on people who may be verbalizing something that I'm struggling with in terms of my own prejudices. So, it hasn't necessarily all changed for the better, but I'm definitely more confrontational now.

While part of the reason David is more confrontational may be because of his struggle with his "own demons," much the same as Brad struggled with his own anger at other white men (and perhaps himself), David also notes that his desire to challenge comes from rethinking his role as an anti-racist educator. On some level, he asserts, if people are not really challenged, then the potential for learning is diminished:

> And that felt a lot more real to me than a lot of times in the class when we were just.... It was much more human relations-ish, let's help people feel good around each other. I mean we talked about racism and sexism and stuff like that and had some pretty real dialogues about that stuff, but ultimately we would always try to end with people feeling okay, and now I feel like it's okay if people don't feel

> good at the end. If somebody's not upset, or pissed off, then we probably haven't really discussed anything important.

David makes a connection between intellectual engagement and emotional engagement, and that learning is enhanced when something important is discussed that engages the mind and the heart.

Anderson, before he engages another person in a head and heart conversation, asks for permission. And he notes that this is one useful strategy in helping the other person assume some degree of ownership and responsibility for how the conversation proceeds and ultimate result of the discussion:

> When I'm working with a white man, I'll always ask permission if I can challenge him and if I can coach him, and unless he gives me an unequivocal yes, then I just don't go there. If he says, "Yes, but..." I really take that as a no. If he seems ambivalent or unsure, I take that as a no or a maybe, and I come back and ask again. So it's always driven by permission and what he says he's ready to do as well as my intuition of what he's ready to do.

Permission precedes the challenge, but Anderson believes he can be more effective as an educator with other white men when there is mutual agreement on the rules of discussion. While Anderson asks for permission before challenging someone, David is more likely to simply confront the person. Both educators note that challenging assumptions or confronting another person's behavior is important, and further, that it is an important part of their approach and how they view their role as an educator; however, their approaches to challenging a student or participant varies. While this dissertation does not assess the effectiveness of one educator compared to another, they both note that they believe their approaches are useful. One of the reasons that this may be true is that they also both acknowledge that they are a "work in process" and that effectiveness is not

equivalent to being "right." In anti-racism education, they note, there is not a "right way" – only more or less effective approaches toward the same learning goals.

Humility

The issue of "humility" was a consistent concept that arose during the interviews. This last theme within this theme cluster highlights an approach or attitude that seems essential to these educators. Each one at some point in their interview acknowledged that they are still learning to be a more effective anti-racism educator and that they are at their most effective as educators when they approach their work with a sense of humility. Knowing what is the "right" way is equated with hubris or arrogance, and the process of learning and becoming more aware of racism and whiteness is a more complex and nuanced process than what a "right" way might proscribe. This sense of "humility" is a personal educator trait or part of their self-concept and connected to the belief that they should keep their "ego" out of the room. This notion of humility is not related to their sense of moral certitude that racism is wrong and life diminishing.

Jackie discusses the role of humility in how she approaches this work. Jackie's approach as evolved over time, and she notes that staying humble about her own journey has allowed her to create space for others' voices:

> I think I've had a shift in the way I approach my work. I think when I was in graduate school and during that period of time, I approached the work from a place of "I have the information, and I now need to share the information." I think I've become much more humble about it, and I now approach the work as somebody who has some information and has done some thinking about it, and probably more than the average bear. But, I don't have the answers, I kind of look back and look at some other things and I'm like, "Well I have the answer and that's wrong, and this is right" and I don't believe that anymore.

For Jackie, it has become less of an issue of being "right" or "wrong" and being dogmatic about it, and more about holding to the notion that there is still more to learn. Diana also highlights this when she offers:

> I mean I think that there's so much about our own privilege and status that we don't know, and to be conscious of it, and cognizant of it is a good thing, and then when you least expect it, it reveals to you to be even more. So I think knowing that you don't know it all, that you don't have it all, to have a grasp on it at the moment but you might not later, to be humble. I think these are the things you need if you're going to be teaching this stuff because it's kind of theoretical. It is some people's reality, but is it everybody's reality? It's complex.

On another level, it is also about not becoming triggered by the behavior of a student or participant. When an educator is triggered emotionally, particularly around their competence, as Jackie suggests, their effectiveness decreases:

> I think some of my worst moments in doing this work is when I am all up in my ego about what I've accomplished, and what I know and what I've read, and I have to say it's completely and totally meaningless. I think there are plenty of people who have done way more than I have and thought about it way more, and to have ego about it is really just kind of a false thing. But, I think that when I am pushed around my own competence or my own value in engaging in this, or whatever it is, and I get caught in my ego that those are some of my least effective times, and so my vigilance is also around the ego and what it means to do this work and if it's really about me or if it's about something else.

This notion of the educators' ego echoes Shelly's evolution, noted above, from over-structuring the learning process so that one's competence or value has less of an opportunity to be questioned, to a more facilitative and self-disclosing approach where the educator is slightly more vulnerable. Sandra also notes this in her interview when she offers:

> I think it's also allowed me to let go of some of the ego, like I don't have to do what that young guy did in the session the other day, which is to demonstrate to people of color that I get racism, so in some ways that may be how it has manifested as a sense of distancing from it.

Sandra interprets the young man's behavior as stemming from a need to be seen as competent and aware, and like Jackie notes above, time and experience has allowed them to distance themselves from asserting their need and their agenda into the learning environment.

Given the evolving nature of the discourse on whiteness, staying open to the possibility that new information might emerge and influence one's perspective on racism and race relations was another reason several of these educators think it is important to have a sense of humility. As Diana suggests:

> I think what's worked for me is realizing that I don't have it all, and I think that's probably true of any good teacher. And especially with this topic, this area, this angle, this is fairly new and evolving every minute and the angle depending upon where you stand and what part of the country and in what country you stand in. You've got to not hold on too tight, that we're on shifting sand here in terms of you know, once you think you've got it, something changes on the racial mainstream, and you no longer have it.

Being conscious of the value of acting with humility supports their own learning process by staying intellectually curious and emotionally open to evolving notions of racism and whiteness, and bringing their new understanding of these issues back into the classroom or training center.

A third common reason these educators noted why it is useful to work with a sense of humility is highlighted by Shelly's story of learning about our own choices and using feedback about those choices or behaviors as ways of role modeling the journey of becoming increasingly aware about our own racism. Shelly explains:

> I think maybe I've come to grips a little bit, or that it's more okay for me to be vulnerable maybe, or for me to be humble, or to say, "You know what, I really screwed up or I really don't know how to do this."

Shelly notes a way of "stepping out from" being triggered by acknowledging one's fallibility as an educator. She continues:

> Let me give you an example: just two weeks ago, I was speaking with a woman that we both know who teaches a class in the department, a white woman, and she was talking about how she got challenged by students in her class for not de-centering her whiteness in the creation of her syllabus, and she said because she had laid out the syllabus as "teaching students this, teaching students this, ..." and then she had this whole section on teaching students of color. And so they challenged her and they said, "How come this is all about teaching students, but this section is about teaching students of color, so who are these other students?" like, why are students of color picked out about this thing. She said, "You know, they were totally right. I hadn't looked through this lens." She told me this story, and I was like, "I would have done the exact same thing." I could see myself doing that. It was like how do we ever master this, how do we ever get good at this?

Shelly shares a story that, while not about her own experience, is enlightening as it echoes some of the same questions and concerns that she raises about her own ability and competence as an educator. She can see herself making the same choices and behaving in the same manner. Shelly's recounting of that story is similar to many of the other white educators that I interviewed – perhaps the biggest reason to have a sense of humility in one's work as an educator is so that one is able to role model the very human nature of this journey.

As these educators described their teaching styles and approaches to this work, they offered various ways to think about the learning goals, a number of different content issues that are important in exploring, several methods to support the learning process and a few key issues in how they think about their own personal styles. These educators described their teaching as focusing on awareness, accountability, developing a vision for a socially just world, and methods to address racial injustice. In order to do this, they felt that concepts and issues, such as racial history, white culture, white privilege, violence,

identity development, individual and systems level behaviors and connections to other forms of oppression, are important to explore with students or participants. While most use a variety of experiential learning techniques, the role of presenting information, or having students/participants research, read, and reflect on various issues are important methods for supporting their learning processes. The use of dialogue was frequently mentioned as a method to bring people together, develop relationships based on trust, and – with that as a foundation – explore together the commonalities and differences and the power systems that impact those commonalities and differences. Their approach to this work is largely facilitative in nature. While they all expressed the value of attending to pacing, having a sense of energy and passion in the work and making concepts concrete, the overarching approach is one of viewing oneself as a role model – as a learner and activist. The other common theme is the importance of having a sense of humility as an educator – that even with the "right" goals, good content, and appropriate process, understanding whiteness and racism is a complex and challenging journey.

How White Anti-racism Educators Describe Meaning of Whiteness

One of the fundamental aspects of this research project is to obtain a better understanding of how white anti-racism educators define and make sense of "whiteness." The notion of whiteness has been examined and excavated in the past several years, and has gained a great deal of currency within the field of anti-racism education (Tatum, 1999; B. Thompson, 2001). "Whiteness" is now a part of the common parlance among white people engaged in anti-racist activities on college campuses, community organizations, and in many corporations. While the notion of "whiteness" has become

more familiar in these contexts, there exists a range of opinions on what it is and how educators should approach the teaching of it. Moreover, there continues to be both confusion and discomfort with the notion of "whiteness." Many anti-racism educators, including some of the ones interviewed for this study, see little difference between racism and whiteness. Other anti-racism educators believe that to focus on whiteness just reifies white centrality in the discussion of racism. Finally, there are more similarities than differences in how anti-racism educators conceive of and make meaning of whiteness; however, an exploration of both the similarities as well as differences provides useful insight into how definitions of whiteness (both theirs and others') have influenced their teaching.

In reviewing the data from these interviews, two important streams became clear. First, these white anti-racism educators articulated a range of *feelings* about whiteness. As I note above, some of these educators expressed ambivalence about the appropriate role of examining whiteness within anti-racism education. Others were unclear as what the differences are between whiteness and racism. I will address the issue of *feelings about* whiteness and teaching whiteness in the next section. The second stream of data is what these anti-racism educators *think* whiteness is. In this regard, these educators identified several aspects to how they define whiteness. Principally, these educators understand "whiteness" as ideology, as white culture, as white privilege, and/or as systemic power. These definitional theme clusters are somewhat artificial as all of them are highly interrelated, and to speak of one without referring to its connections with the other ways in which whiteness is understood leaves this understanding incomplete.

However, these definitions provide anchor points for exploring how white educators might teach whiteness or focus on whiteness within anti-racism education.

Whiteness as Ideology

Whiteness as ideology is a key way in which these anti-racist educators make sense of whiteness as a concept. The way in which whiteness is understood is principally about a hegemonic view of the world, or paradigm, in which white people are the center. One of the participants half-joked that we have made significant progress by understanding that the earth is not at the center of the universe, and that Western European countries are not at the center of the world, but we still haven't been able to shift our belief that white people are at the center of the world's population. Within this context, domination, the myth of meritocracy, and lack of transparency are the underlying themes that structure this view of whiteness. All of these themes are about how white people feel about themselves and what they believe about how their world is organized.

White Superiority

One of the ways in which these white anti-racist educators describe the meaning of whiteness is that it is inextricably linked with the belief that white people are superior to all other people, and this belief places white people at the center of the universe. All that is good, important, right, and valuable in the world is by, through, and because of white people. Quoting Patty DeRosa, Diana articulates this aspect of whiteness when she notes that: "the third level is whiteness as ideology, and that whiteness as ideology looks at the system of white superiority, white domination, which is very linked to the whiteness by privilege." Diana suggests that this sense of white supremacy can operate at

both the conscious and unconscious levels – a sort of unknown shadow side for most white people. Jackie also describes whiteness as dominance as when she says:

> It takes a real complexity of thinking to get to see and look at whiteness because of the way that race has been constructed in our society, and I'm only talking obviously about our society here in the U.S. So, what's in the whiteness bucket really is "what isn't in the whiteness bucket?" I mean, what isn't in the whiteness bucket because we're really talking about looking at analyzing and deconstructing what we have come to know as true and real and normal in the way things are, and whatever, as being a part of how whiteness gets represented and the thinking about how systems work and how organizations work, and how meetings are run and how decisions are made and how voting occurs, and how the political arena works, and how social services work – if you really look at it and do an analysis of it, it's all embedded in this concept of racial superiority or dominance, or whiteness, because that's what it is here in the U.S.

This ideology of "domination" or "white people as superior" has several important implications. One implication of this ideology is that the successes and lives of white people are *overvalued* while the lives and successes of peoples of color are *under or de-valued*. Diana notes that her mother "liv[es] in a world in which she sees everybody needs to be American, i.e., White. Like on TV, she's like, "What happened to the Americans?" She doesn't see Puerto Ricans, black people, Asians, she doesn't see them as Americans. So, that's so typical…" For Diana's mother, "American" is shorthand for "white" and, thus, positions white people at the center without ever needing to name it. It is similar to Shelly's story above about her colleague's error in not being clear about whom she was speaking when she identified different populations in the syllabus. These are both examples of a larger dynamic in which the subtext is that white people are superior through the overvaluing of white people and the undervaluing of people of color.

Another way in which whiteness as ideology as domination/superiority manifests itself is that white people become out of touch with reality and that this arrogance leads to poor decisions. Jane offers a good example of how this manifests:

> One of my clients unfortunately is paying like $7.8 billion over 10 years because of being stupid, because they made three advertising mistakes, and they were unwilling to deal with the source and change the way that they were doing. My thing is, "Hey, it's costing you billions of dollars". And their unwillingness to say "We can fix this." They are now fixing it, but it had to be a crisis. I foresee a lot more class action suits because of organizations' arrogance and unwillingness to change, and I see a lot of organizations going out of business. My thing is, "Hey, you had a choice, you could have done what was competitive," so that's what I'm surprised about sometimes, is the arrogance, the short-sightedness, and how entrenched and unwilling to change many systems are. I don't think it's about giving up power. I think it's about incompetence. I think these organizations and these leaders are so incompetent at times that they don't know what they don't know. They can't imagine a world different than what they've had, and so they are so stuck in the way they've managed or behaved in the past that they can't imagine a different future, and I think it'll get them in the end.

Jane's view is that whiteness is an ideology that is "baked into the system," and this mindset keeps white people out of touch with reality even when the financial and other implications are tremendous. One of the interesting ideas that Jane puts forth is that the reluctance or unwillingness of organizational leaders to acknowledge how whiteness manifests itself in the organizational world-view is really about deep incompetence. Believing that, as white people or as a white organization, they "know best" can lead to hubris of the first order and, ultimately, failure.

America as a Meritocracy

Another way in which these anti-racism educators describe "whiteness as ideology" is by naming a fundamental belief that most white Americans hold that this country is a meritocracy. This belief suggests that "the best wins," and that anyone can succeed if they are willing to work hard and play by the rules. Of course, playing by the "right rules" is also playing by the "white rules" as Shelly suggests.

> So we're combating a whole lifetime of ideology with our students. So Affirmative Action for example, is reverse discrimination, because in a

> meritocracy you don't give these people a leg up, you don't give them a hand, they should work as hard as anyone else does to get that job. There's a lot of stumbling blocks, but I'm focusing on that stumbling block as the whole idea that I can tell them this, I can show them these examples, but really I'm combating an ideology that's been implanted, been imbedded, and reinforced for their whole lives. When I say it right now, it sounds like I'm very narrow-focused, but yet I think you can see how that idea, belief in meritocracy, really interacts with a whole lot of pieces of what we teach about.

Shelly acknowledges that this ideology has been implanted and reinforced. It frames how white people think about such things as affirmative action, poverty and social welfare, immigration, educational achievement, and so on. Shelly believes that this myth of the U.S. as a meritocracy is a major component of how whiteness manifests itself and structures race relations in the U.S. today. As a result, it also interacts with and supports many of the different concepts and skills she teaches in her anti-racism work.

Whiteness is Normative

The third theme that supports the perspective that whiteness is understood as ideology is that whiteness is normative (by white people, in particular). White anti-racism educators described the sense that whether whiteness is about domination or about meritocracy, is certainly is also about normativity. Like white culture, which will be described below, ideology is pervasive and is transparent to those that hold the ideology. Whiteness is seen as "just the way things are." Attention is never called to itself, and as Sandra described above, it is like the water that fish swim in.

Several of the white anti-racist educators noted that this seeming normativity is a component of an ideology where "white" is the standard or benchmark by which all things are measured. This ideology is widely held by white people but is at the same time transparent to them (us). Shelly notes, "The only way I know to describe it as, it's like

"the norm," like whiteness is "normal," and then because it's so normal, it's invisible." The normativity of whiteness, as the *de facto* standard by which people are compared, is in place while "color blindness" supports that it is never addressed. Shelly continued by noting, "Because we live in a society that is color blind, or because being color blind is seen by so many people as the right thing to do, then whiteness has like gone undercover. It's the norm, but it's not the recognized norm. It's like the unconscious norm, I guess." It presents a double-bind in that while whiteness is the normative standard that is used to make sense of the world, the notion of "colorblindness" requires that (white) people not acknowledge that their ideology and values play a role in how they think about people of color and about themselves. Several of the anti-racism educators I interviewed noted that this is one of the most significant challenges in teaching whiteness: the resistance to notice what one has been carefully taught not to notice.

Whiteness as Culture

The notion of white culture as a part of whiteness came up in several of the interviews. These participants identified that there is a cultural aspect to being white and that this aspect is a part of the larger way in which whiteness is made normative and how privileges are reinforced. Further, they described "white culture" and provided examples of how it manifests in U.S. society. And, finally, they noted that white culture has a very real and tangible impact on whiteness.

There is some debate as to whether white culture is a part of whiteness. Many scholars in critical white studies that assert that while there are many different white ethnic cultures, "white culture" is an amalgamation of the ways in which whiteness as

ideology is made manifest through white privilege. Whiteness is primarily about a white supremacist ideology made manifest through power structures and privilege. However, several of these participants made a convincing argument that whiteness is also about white culture – the ways in which various cultural aspects, such as language, music, family and so on, give context and substance to white privilege. White culture is about some of the norms and values that are implicit in families, communities, and organizations. Not surprisingly then, of the participants that talked about whiteness as culture, all of them were organizational consultants. This group of participants uses "white culture" as a way to point out the unwritten norms and assumptions that structure organizational systems, programs, and processes.

Tim discussed his belief that white culture is a part of whiteness. He argues that white culture includes power and privilege, and that it is through understanding this relationship that one is able to obtain a more complete understanding of whiteness. Tim offers:

> Well, there are two schools of thought that I've seen. One is that whiteness is all the power and privilege, and the other is that there is such a thing as white culture, and part of white culture is power and privilege. So, David Roediger, for instance, and Noel Ignatiev, the Race Traitor folks are pretty much behind the "whiteness is all the power and privilege," and a much broader, more diffuse group has said that we need to look at the cultural aspects. So, I'm in that latter camp.

Tim notes that there are at least two schools of thought regarding how whiteness is conceived. Further, as noted before, depending on how one conceives of whiteness will determine how one chooses to teach it; thus, the inclusion of "white culture" is no small issue for white anti-racism educators. Anderson also supports the notion of including an examination of white culture when addressing the issue of whiteness. In this passage, he identifies white cultural values as an aspect of understanding whiteness:

> I do think in terms of what I think are some cultural values that I think come out of a European and a European/American white context. So, I do think in those terms in terms of cultural differences, so when I think of the kind of intellectualizing, the head being more important than the heart, the focus on individuality, focus on the material world, controlling the material world, those are things I associate with a kind of European/American and/or white identity.

For these educators, white culture is different from ideology. Whereas whiteness as ideology is principally about a worldview that posits white people as superior and at the center, white culture is about the norms and values that impact the various dimensions of a culture (family, religion, art, etc.) and the artifacts of such a culture (use of time, intimacy, etc.).

Tim and Jane discussed what "white culture" is and what it looks like from their vantage point. Jane also shared a part of her experience that accounts for her view of whiteness as including notions of white culture. Jane views whiteness as including white culture, and part of how she began to understand whiteness was to initiate conversations about the definition of white culture. She offered:

> For me, when I think about whiteness, it's really understanding the white culture. So, if you think about anthropology, sociology, what is culture? Culture is about our language, it's about our notion of family, history, religion, all those kinds of things.

Tim's perspective supports Jane's notion of white culture. For him, it's a somewhat "fuzzy" concept, as he believes that where one culture begins and ends is not always clear; in particular, white culture is broad and may cross over into various white ethnic cultures as well as the various cultures of people of color. For example, where some white people might think of Elvis as an artifact of white culture, his success is based on the cooptation of black musical styles of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Thus, in this case, Elvis as an artifact of white culture is not essentially clear. Tim continues:

> Culture is a concept that's used in virtually every social science and much of the humanities, and each has it's own particular definition about what it is, and they argue back and forth about what culture is per se, and it's also a very fuzzy concept. So, where one culture starts and another stops is not always clear. So, in describing white culture, I need to have the room and the understanding that whatever description I give you is going to be subject to all those uncertainties and fuzziness, and if you're not really ready to hear and understand that there's such a thing, you can easily come up with counter examples.

Given these considerations, the terrain of white culture has been examined in order to obtain a clearer picture of what is included when one thinks of white culture. Having a sense of clarity about what white culture is and is not supports white anti-racist educators in painting a picture for their students or participants so that they can make meaning of whiteness. Jane notes:

> I think that what's happened over time is that I'm much more clear about what these things are, so I feel much more grounded in understanding white culture, and now that I've been in corporations, I can see how they really operate functionally in an organization. You know, the whole communication style about the King's English, and written tradition. You know, why do we document everything? Don't discuss personal life, well, I really understand now about whites wanting to keep things compartmentalized and separated.

In the excerpt above, Jane notes that her evolving understanding of white culture has provided her a framework for assessing and identifying how whiteness operates in an organization. She discussed how her understanding of white culture has emerged over time, and that in uncovering white culture and gaining clarity on what it is has equipped her with a greater range of choices in how to address whiteness. She shared how she came to this understanding:

> I didn't know myself what white culture was, but I think what has emerged over time....actually, when I was teaching in Oklahoma, we would do an activity which I continue to do. We would ask people to take down all these dimensions of culture – art and music, history, language, family, communication styles, emotion, all of those elements – and I would get people in groups and I would ask people to identify what is white culture, and knowing that it didn't mean that everyone accepts these things, but if you were an anthropologist looking at white cultures,

> what people have done around black culture and other dimensions of culture, what would you say are the things that kind of hold whites together, or that are shared? They'd come up with the same damn list every time. So, I began to kind of say, "Well, wait a minute, there are things here that keep on coming up that maybe other cultural groups hold as well as a value, but clearly is true of white culture" and some of the assumptions, some of the notions about status, and stuff. So, out of that I really created kind of an initial taxonomy or paradigm that talked about what is white culture. And, as I look at organizations, they are based on these things. You know, "rugged individualism,", "you get what you deserve, " "the individual is the primary unit, " "competition - be number one, you know, " "master and control things, " "action orientation, " 'history based on Northern European, " "Protestant work ethic, " I loved that one because it was "hard work equals success.". We believe, but you know, so does that mean for example, that the immigrant who's working three jobs isn't working hard? And, you know, unpacking some of these things.

Brad also notes what white culture is and that it is useful to gain greater clarity on how it manifests itself:

> It's a social construction. It's a way of understanding one's self, one's group that's created by white people to better ourselves, to give us privilege and to disadvantage people who we define as not white. This could be language, people of color, and it's a social construct. It's embedded in the census. It's embedded in newspapers. It's embedded in medicine. It's embedded across the board. So it's very, very difficult to untangle.

Brad continues by noting that in gaining greater clarity, one can make choices:

> And white people may start out saying there's a lot of confusion, and a lot of "we can't do that," but it gets very clear very fast that we do have a lot of information about what whiteness is and what aspects of it we like and what aspects we don't like.

Brad's suggestion that based on that information we can more clearly examine what aspects white people like and do not like raises the larger issue about the implications or impact of examining white culture. Tim frames the value and potential impact of raising the concept of whiteness as culture nicely by highlighting the double-bind that white people are faced when they consider that they have a culture:

> A lot of what we call American is white American culture because white American culture has taken on the name of American, and since it's the dominant

> culture in our society, it's been able to make that stick. Hence, there's confusion over that, over the past maybe 15 or 20 years, they're starting to sort a little bit of it out, and if we see something about "the American experience," it's no longer just the experience of European immigrants. Sometimes we throw other groups into that kind of thing, but at the same time "American" has become a catch word for white American and almost a code word, in some respects, so that if we call ourselves Americans and only Americans, we don't even have to call ourselves white Americans. The difficulty with calling ourselves white Americans is that it locates us within a racial structure, and then we have to begin to look at the structure, and that gets us into the idea of power and privilege, which are aspects and values of white American culture, but they also contradict other values of freedom and democracy. So we have the whole American dilemma named I guess by, what's his name from the 1940s? … Myrdal. And that becomes very problematic for white folks, so we prefer just simply to call ourselves "Americans" and avoid that whole issue and discussion.

Indeed, Tim remarks that there is a lot of incentive not to discuss the idea that white people have a "white culture" and that there is very real content to the idea. However, to support white people in addressing their whiteness and its relationship to the experience of people of color, raising the concept of white culture is an important way to explore whiteness:

> So, when you're the dominant culture, you don't really, again it's a matter of tools and perspective, your culture just works for you all the time, and so you can ignore it and act as if it's not there, and say things such as, "Well, I don't have a culture, everybody else does." Or see it as bland and see other people's culture as exotic, things like that. So, just understanding the culture and locating it within racial hierarchy, those two tasks are tremendously difficult, but they're also tremendously rich and complex.

And, by raising the notion of white culture as a component of whiteness, then one can consider the implications for people of color. As Jane notes, part of the value of uncovering the content of white culture is so that one can understand how racism manifests itself and impacts people of color. As an example, she offers:

> And, you know, if you're Latino in an organization, you're gonna say, "This place is cold and not a place for me if I can't bring my personal life in." So, there are ways in which it's [white culture] been more living and alive as I've been doing

> the work I've been doing in organizations. And I've asked people at times to look at, as they look at these things, which of the things are operative here?

Thus, making the connections between white culture and whiteness provides these anti-racist educators an opportunity to locate how racism takes shape.

Whiteness as Power

One of the key aspects of how these white anti-racism educators describe whiteness is its relationship to power. As Tim noted above regarding the new Abolitionist work of Roediger and Ignatiev, many scholars and activists think of whiteness as specifically about power and privilege. They describe power as the ability to enforce, through rewards and sanctions, a group's will. In this context, a dominant/subordinate relationship exists between white people and people of color. Within the larger discussion about the connections between racism and whiteness, Shelly framed the issue of whiteness as power by noting:

> Racism is something that impacts people... that only white people can be racist... I follow that model. That surely people of color can discriminate based on race, they can be biased, they can discriminate, but they are not racist, they do not create racism because of the lack of political and socio-economic power. I follow that whole thing, you know, the levels in terms of dominant and subordinate.

Shelly notes that whiteness is about having white people and people of color in a dominant and subordinate relationship and not having white people even understand how their group power reinforces this differential power dynamic.

Class Dimensions

Whiteness as power brings both a class and race connotation for these white anti-racist educators. Critical white studies implicates white people in the history, dynamics,

and effects of racism by extending beyond an analysis of race to include an analysis of how economic, capitalist power structures serve the interests of white people. Participants discussed this issue and several indicated that describing whiteness necessitates a conversation about how whiteness was created in order to support the interests of slave owners and commercial interests. Several recalled the history of Bacon's Rebellion as an example of how race and class were crossed, resulting in the ability of poor whites to align themselves with owning class whites. David shared how whiteness, race, and class connect in a story about his father:

> You know my dad's newest hobby now is whenever he goes to an ATM machine and it has languages other than English, he calls up the bank and screams at them. Genetic retention, so you see what I'm saying… and I think this is just because he's starting to feel that his position of power is a little vulnerable. But, of course, numbers...you know I hear all this stuff about white people are going to be a minority – how is that being defined? If you define it in terms of political and economic power, South Africa's a good example. But, I don't know, as long as capitalism is in place, there isn't much hope for the overall annihilation of whiteness and racism. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be trying, and working toward that.

David's reflection on his father's "newest hobby" is powerful in that economic power, privilege, language, and culture are all fused in this example. David raises the issue that whiteness is not about representation, per se, but the elimination of whiteness and racism requires the elimination of capitalism. For David, whiteness is about the economics of race in the United States.

David's story is also a story fundamentally about fear. Both humorous and poignant, David's father fears for how the United States is changing. While representation does not equate with power and control, societal changes have pushed many institutions into making minor changes to products and services in order to enhance revenue. The fear is palpable, and it reinforces the need by this man to ensure that

whiteness maintains its control. Fear is one of the underlying themes that account for this notion that whiteness is about power.

Holding onto Power

Another theme that emerges from participants' discussion of whiteness as power is greed by those in power. Greed manifests itself in the continual control of resources, opportunities, and decisions. In discussing how whiteness relates to power, Jane noted:

> Clearly, as we've seen at Enron and other places, you know, the grab for power is pretty strong, and needing to maintain or hold that power at anybody else's expense, and the individual greed is so huge, that again this is part of white culture... There is no commitment or concern for the larger whole.

Jane's assertion reminded me of the quote about how absolute power corrupts absolutely, and whiteness supports the belief that acquiring more money and power (even at the expense of others) is a legitimate venture. Further, this notion that accumulating power is right and just when coupled with the ideology that white people are more valued and valuable than people of color inevitably results in the kind of racism we see today – for example, where a disproportionate number of the U.S.'s poor and working poor are people of color. Similar to David's story above, numbers do not necessarily equate with power when fear and greed are operating:

> People are saying that representation equals elimination of oppression, which it doesn't. And, I think that we keep on acting as if "well, if we have representation, we're fine." You know one of the pieces of work I used to do, and still do, is "what's your vision?" you know – diversity, inclusion, whatever you want to call it. And, for many people it's still representation. It's not about shared power, and I think that to me is the real question about it, if you think about this work and what its success looks like. It's not just that we have more people of color in an organization, it's what's their roles, and their power and influence, and what does it all look like.

Diana suggests that whiteness is about power as well. For her, whiteness is principally about the acquisition and use of power; in the United States, economic and social power has been and continues to be controlled by white people. On some level, she asserts, perhaps power and whiteness are the same thing:

> I start to wonder if there is even such a thing as whiteness separate from just plain old power, you know, the power to be in control, the power to dominate. Obviously, that power has rested in white people, so I guess that's where the whiteness comes from, but I start sometimes to think about whether we're just not talking about a system of domination by those who have power, and they happen to be white, but you could look at another country or another part of the world in which color wasn't an issue – you know, an African country where everybody's black, but there's one group that's dominating the others,… poorly, and that's not about white skin. It's about power and money.

Diana suggests that she is "not done thinking about it yet," but isn't quite sure that whiteness is a universal thing if people in other parts of the world control power in an effort to dominate their society or country with their particular set of values and worldview. In the United States, however, whiteness is clearly in regards to white people controlling "power and money" and she believes that white supremacy and superiority accounts for this view of whiteness.

One of the themes that came from participants' discussion of "whiteness as power" is the sense that this may be the most intractable aspect of whiteness since it is tied to economic power through the U.S.'s capitalist structure. While it is not a theme that accounts for this view of whiteness, I raise it here because the underlying themes of fear and greed noted above create conditions such that addressing whiteness on this level becomes extraordinarily challenging. To address whiteness, white people need to act beyond the fear and greed that keeps such power in its place, but it is not an easy thing to

do. And it remains important to maintain a sense of reality with regard to this; as Sandra notes:

> I'm very deeply attracted to what James Cohen talks about that white people need to destroy their white selves and re-create themselves as black and brown beings, you know, he's talking more ideologically. We commit ourselves to the struggles of black and brown people, take ideological positions that will race us as black and brown in the power structure. I've been doing that for a long time, that's why I'm always never sure if I'll have a job, you know? But, I also think that for a lot of people that's lofty crap, I don't think my mother-in-law who's been cleaning houses for white folks most of her life and still lives way below poverty, I don't think she'd buy that.

As both David and Jane note above, it can be challenging to maintain a sense of hope in eradicating whiteness given the economic power in place to maintain it; however, understanding the underlying dynamics of this aspect of whiteness is important in order to eradicate it. David suggests, "As long as capitalism is in place, there isn't much hope for the overall annihilation of whiteness and racism. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be trying, and working toward that."

Whiteness as Privilege

The fourth way in which these white anti-racism educators consistently describe the meaning of whiteness is that of privilege. White privilege is the predominant way in which white people support whiteness; however, the majority of white people are not aware that they have racial privilege, or if they are aware, they exercise such privilege by not considering it too deeply. These white anti-racism educators note that their primary task in addressing whiteness is to raise the awareness of their students or participants regarding white privilege and how it operates; this was a pervasive thread in the interviews. When we started talking about white privilege as an aspect of whiteness, each

of the participants became more animated and engaged in the conversation. It was apparent that this aspect was something they had done some considerable thinking and are passionate about. Heloise explained:

> Yeah, I think what I can talk about easier is white privilege and how things tend to run for the benefit of whites and how whites actually create whatever white means, and have created institutional structures kind of as power structures and ways of being, and ways of reading the world, and ways of defining the world, and ways of seeing the world, that tends to continually privilege white people. That part to me is real easy to talk about.

Thus, I will briefly note how most defined white privilege, provide a few personal examples from the participants, and then share, in more detail, the story of one of the participants of how she came to understand white privilege rather than provide examples from each participant. I will conclude by highlighting some of the issues that account for this view of whiteness based on her story.

Diana names several types of whiteness, and one of them is white privilege. She offers: "There is another level of whiteness that's about whiteness as privilege. So the ways in which their physical whiteness gets them things that other people don't get, the doors that open to us because of white privilege." In Diana's definition, privilege is based on physical characteristics that include appearance, communication style, and dress. Other educators concur with that notion. For example, in speaking of white privilege, Brad notes, "I wear jeans most of the time. White socks, old beat up shoes. I never worry about dressing up, I never worried about being stopped or being seen as a... I don't worry about what kind of language I use. If I feel like cussing, I cuss." And in Brad's example, the tables have turned over time but still whiteness positions white people to receive the benefit of the doubt – he doesn't have to worry about how his style of dress might influence how he is perceived.

In discussing the notion of white privilege, each of these anti-racism educators shared examples (like Brad's example above) to illustrate what they mean be white privilege. Rather than cataloguing the examples here, I will share three stories that point out some of the ways in which these white anti-racism educators think about white privilege in their own lives. Their ability to self-disclose how white privilege impacts their own lives and relationships was symptomatic of all of the participants. Shelly had understood white privilege at a fairly intellectual level through her work as a diversity educator, and had read Peggy McIntosh's (1992) article about white privilege. But it was not until she began to explore how whiteness manifests itself and structures relationships that she considered her own family's history. She related:

> Because that was the first time that I realized that my family had in fact benefited from racism, that my middle-class family, that I had always envisioned as this middle-class family, were only one generation removed from working class. My father grew up in Harlem, and his uncles and everybody in his family were butchers. And they had [family name]'s deli, and he would have stayed there and been a butcher right there on 125th Street for the rest of his life if it hadn't been for that that he joined the Army Air Corps during WWII, didn't get out of New Jersey, didn't go anywhere. In the Army Air Corps I think they had one plane, this was before the Air Force was invented. But, because of that, he got a free ride to Springfield College right down here, a living stipend and a free ride, and then stayed on and got his master's degree, and I have always lived a white, middle class, suburban life... because of that. And that was this big awakening, because before I think I had always thought of racism as something that affected other people, and even by this point I knew that white privilege existed, but this was the most profound, personal example of white privilege. It hit me like a ton of bricks.

In this example, Shelly provides a highly personal example and notes how white privilege is structured and reinforced by institutions such as the U.S. government. And the effects are generational – many of her life's opportunities are created because of what her father was able to take advantage of in his early years. Again, we see how class and race intersect to support Shelly's family in living a "middle-class" life because of the GI

benefits her father was able to use. Shelly also notes that her study of racism and anti-racism had been primarily focused on the experiences of people of color, but not that her freedom and choices were intimately linked with other people's oppression.

David offers another example of how white privilege operates. In this example, David shares how his consulting work with a school in Virginia provided him an opportunity to consider how privilege creates a sense of "color blindness" that can result in poor information on which decisions are based.

> I was doing some assessment and this was a school in Alexandria, Virginia, and I was meeting with the dean of students, and just this preliminary meeting, and I'm asking him so what's going on here. And he says "I'll show you." So he takes me to the cafeteria, and he says "You know, the biggest problem here is how the students of color segregate themselves." So, he opens the cafeteria door to show me. And, right in the front of the cafeteria there is one table of Korean students. There are a lot of international students from Korea at the school, and they are all sitting at this one table in the front of the cafeteria. And off to the left there are these two tables of African American students, and he points to them, and what he doesn't see is that there are about 20 tables of all white students, and he doesn't see that. His response is "look at these people of color segregating themselves" and again that's whiteness, that's the definition of whiteness and that's racism, that's a symptom of racism, that he can't see that.

David points out how the principal's unwillingness or inability to see how white privilege operates impacts his assessment of the "problem" on his campus, and therefore, his choices and decisions. Further, as David suggests, such decisions on the part of the principal reinforce the cycle of oppression and how resources and opportunities are assigned or accessed. David wonders whether he, himself, is implicated in this dynamic – that there are choices he does not consider because of white privilege that results in the continuation of racism.

As I referenced in her short biography, Liz's entrance and much of her focus in anti-racism work has been on uncovering and elucidating how white privilege operates.

Liz had always thought of herself as a "nice" person, and like Shelly, focused on the experience of people of color while never considering that their oppression had a complement: more opportunity, freedom and resources for white people. In this excerpt from her interview, detailed in some length, she offers how she came to understand white privilege in her own life:

> Once I saw that I was in a better position than my African American female friends here in this building with regard to being credible in the knowledge system, I understood that it was easier for me to get to write proposals, to get money/grants, to do work on grants and to get it published and believed. It was harder for my African American colleagues than for me. Now this was very upsetting to me in terms of my view of myself which had been previously that everything I had in life was what I had wanted and worked for and earned and deserved. I began to see that being white had worked in my favor and put me above, ahead of others, and I began to conceive white privilege as the upside of discrimination and also to be amazed that I had never read about it, that I'd never read anything on white privilege. I know now that David Wellman had published a book, *Portraits of White Racism*, but I hadn't heard of it or read it, but I began to conceive this as the arithmetical upside of discrimination, and I began to wonder why discussions of race hadn't included the upside and discussions of gender hadn't include the upside in the shape of male privilege. I told you it was disconcerting to realize that perhaps I had tenure because I was white and that perhaps doors had opened for me not because of my individual merit. The other thing is that I began to doubt that the United States was one person, one vote really, or that one person, one vote worked. This was many decades before the Florida elections, but I began to divine that not everybody can get to the polls and that it's white privilege to be able to. Not everyone is able to drive a car to a polling place with parking and you can park and vote, etc., so that was sickening in another way because I began to think I shouldn't trust that so-called democracy was really a democracy, that I was living in a place where your skin color really did matter in how fully you were able to participate in the voting system. So then I thought I had seen something very big, though very sickening, because it was moderately dizzying to imagine that I didn't deserve what I had, or hadn't earned all that I had. But my mind, I just said "there must be more where this comes from." I had seen something huge, I had access to the knowledge system in a way that my African American friends in this building didn't have. I had heard their story, pictures of the black women in this building, I had heard some of their stories and had some times felt when they were stories of discrimination, I sometimes felt "how awful for them," but I never felt how exempt for me, the reverse. That my ease was the compliment of their dis-ease. It corresponded to their dis-ease, and the two were interrelated. I would hear, for example, of the bad

> treatment from the cops that they suffered, including in my town, but never that I was being over-protected by the cops or over served by the law and order system.

Liz's story is powerful in that she talks about coming to this understanding of white privilege largely on her own – through thinking about her own experience as a white woman academic. Her experience of working with male faculty and the resulting frustration that came from that allowed her to consider that connections and parallels between these "nice" oppressive men and "nice" oppressive white people.

In Liz's recounting of this experience, she notes that her self-concept as a person was wrapped in the notion that what she has in life she deserved and she earned. Through her examination of how male academics were privileged as well as privileging (certain forms of knowing and knowledge), she reconsidered what it was like for her African American colleagues and that she might not have earned what she had based on her own merit. As Liz recounts, she began to think that she might be the wrong gender but the right color, and that influenced the fact that she had a doctorate and was tenured. One of the issues Liz raises is that white privilege is difficult to untangle and understand because of a deep belief that we (white people) have earned what we have, and not that what we have was acquired on the backs and lives of others. She notes that white privilege is an important aspect of understanding whiteness, as white privilege is a part of the "air one breathes."

Another aspect of her story is that whiteness keeps this information invisible and secret. Liz wonders why she had not ever discussed white privilege before. In addition to the deep seated belief of the U.S. as a meritocracy (that Shelly names above) and the "color-blindness" that serves to keep white privilege in place, that other dynamic that accounts for this view of whiteness as white privilege is the silence that is demanded of

white people so as not to consider that one's self concept is perhaps built on several erroneous assumptions. Whiteness as ideology and power are mutually reinforcing, and both serve to keep white privilege in place – unnamed and unexplored.

Similar to the notion of whiteness as power identified above, several of the anti-racism educators expressed some ambivalence as to whether white privileged can be eradicated. A key issue is whether white people, if they were aware of white privilege in much the same way as Liz is, would they be willing to do something about it? David asks:

> Well it's so interesting because institutionally speaking, it seems like white people are fairly okay with foregoing the possibility of healing the damage that racism does to us, as long as we can hold onto that privilege… I mean I think really the question for me, and maybe for all white people is, "Would I be willing give up that privilege?"

And, if it cannot be eradicated, to what ends should this be explored? The meaningfulness and significance of addressing this issue within the larger context of addressing whiteness is an important issue, as Diana articulates:

> Right, because in this country that's our historical legacy. That's who had it, and that's who still has it. It usually takes a revolution of massive support to change those certain structures that have always been. They don't go quietly. So, when we talk about privilege and white people have privilege, they're like, "Well, how do we give up the privilege?" Well, here you can't; you can't give up your white skin, and when your white skin is walking down the street, your white skin is going to get privileges that a person of color skin next to you is not going to get. You can't not get them. So, it brings into question, "Well, how effective will anti-racist activism actually be if you can never really shed your white privilege?" It's an important question.

Certainly Diana's question problematizes this aspect of whiteness, but it is a critical question for anti-racism educators to examine as they consider the historical legacy of whiteness and how whiteness can be interrupted or addressed. Where David asks the question would white people be willing to give up their privilege, Diana asks a different

question about whether they actually can give up their privilege. The answers to both questions have implications for the primary research question about what whiteness is for white anti-racism educators and how it informs their practice.

Feelings and Thoughts about Teaching Whiteness and their Influence

In the section above, I examine four ways in which these educators describe the meaning of whiteness, which include whiteness as ideology, culture, power, and privilege. These ways of describing the meaning of whiteness comes from their experience and exposure to writing and thinking in academic contexts, community work, and organizational consulting. Many of these participants have written or edited books on anti-racism or multicultural education and whiteness in addition to their teaching and consulting work. Their journeys have taken them through learning about racism and their roles as white people to exploring ways to engage in anti-racism work to considering the powerful ways in which white ideology/supremacy, culture, power, and privilege structure organizations and relationships. It has left each of them with having to answer the question: given what I understand about the nature of whiteness, how can I incorporate that into my work? This study aims to provide the reader information about how an understanding of whiteness informs these educators' work and what that might mean for other white anti-racism educators as they consider the meaning of whiteness and their practice. Given the ways in which these educators describe the meaning of whiteness, I now consider how these themes influence their thoughts and feelings regarding the teaching of whiteness as well as how their own whiteness has influenced their teaching.

These anti-racism educators described a range of thoughts and feelings that came up for them as they consider teaching whiteness. The primary themes derived from those thoughts and feelings are ambivalence about whiteness (what it means and how much attention should be paid to it), uncertainty about the future of anti-racism (coupled with a sense of hope), anxiety about their competence, and having compassion and understanding for others. Interestingly, these themes are a reflection of how these educators understand whiteness in their own lives; they made a consistent connection between whiteness in their own lives and how notions of uncertainty, hope, anxiety, compassion, and understanding shape their conception of how to teach whiteness. Several participants expressed some ambivalence about how whiteness differs from racism, and wondered whether there should be a focus on whiteness if it potentially re-centers it. The idea of uncertainty with hope was a second consistent theme. For many of these educators, they shared how they felt uncertain about the ability to make significant inroads into racism. They indicated that it was easy to feel lonely or disconnected. They also shared how it was important, however, to have a sense of hope about the impact of such work even when there is substantial evidence that whiteness is fairly intractable. They noted that one of the things that kept them committed to this work is seeing the change in other white people, in teams and in organizations. Even so, many confided feeling anxious about their competence or uncertain about the potential impact of their teaching on others. This has led to many of them creating strategies to obtain the content and process skills necessary to do this work effectively – to stay current; in addition, as was highlighted earlier in this chapter, many talked about the need to "stay humble" and open. And a fourth prevailing theme is the sense of compassion and understanding they

expressed. They noted that it is important to have a sense of compassion for oneself as an educator as well as the participants, and that they too are on a similar journey. A sense of compassion allows for greater understanding of the fear, pain, and loss they witness other white people encounter as they grapple with whiteness. These four themes emerged time and again as these educators discussed what was on their minds and in their hearts as they consider teaching whiteness to white people (in particular).

One important note regarding these four themes and how they manifest themselves in these white anti-racism educators' teaching practice is that these influences primarily address how they relate to other white people (participants and students). While most of them acknowledged that they teach whiteness to students or participants of color as well as white students or participants, their reflections on their own whiteness has particular relevance for how they work with other white people. Therefore, much of the focus in these themes center on how these educators' experience of their white selves influenced how they teach and relate with other white people.

In the sections that follow, I outline each of these four themes: ambivalence about whiteness, living with uncertainty and remaining hopeful, managing anxiety with competence and humility, and remembering to teach with compassion and understanding. As I note above, each of these themes are borne of these educators' understanding of their own whiteness. Thus, after a brief description of the context of these themes I note how participants' understanding of their own whiteness has had an impact on them, and I identify ways in which this understanding of their own whiteness now influences their teaching. I conclude this section and this chapter with a brief summary of these findings.

Ambivalence about Whiteness

The very question that this research tries to answer, "*from the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice?*" suggests that "whiteness" is a new or different concept that might impact one's approach to examining racism. To be sure, the term "whiteness" has been in circulation for some time; however, the concept has been the subject of more attention in the past few years. As Jeff Hitchcock (2002) notes:

> Whether it was the efforts of the forerunners already discussed or whether it was something whose time had simply come, in the 1990s something different happened. Over the four year period from 1990 through 1993 the output of significant work on whiteness equaled that of the preceding twenty years. (p. 166)

As a result, some of the interview participants were somewhat reluctant to talk about "whiteness" as they believe they have little information on what it is or that the term itself is inaccessible. For example, when asked a question about the meaning of whiteness, Anderson stated:

> Michael, let me say there's a way that I feel totally inadequate talking about this because I really think of this whiteness thing as coming out of an academic kind of context, and having something to do with this thing called deconstructionism or whatever it's called. It's one of these things that I know when people talk about it, but I don't use that kind of language, and when I read academic material on whiteness, I have no clue what people are saying. I don't have a fucking clue. And, there may be some anti-elitist kind of intellectual stuff I have going on that I just don't like all that high falutin' language.

Shelly also hesitated when asked the question, and noted:

> Ok, this is the part of the interview I've been dreading. 'cause I was like "whiteness, okay, I know that's his topic, but what do I know about it?" I haven't done all the reading and everything like you have about it. It's like an emerging understanding to me.

Both of these participants, as well as the others, shared that they were talking about whiteness with some degree of trepidation because they were uncertain as to what exactly

it was all about, even though they offered insightful thoughts about the meaning of whiteness that were similar to participants who seemed fairly confident about their grasp of this concept. In other words, I was intrigued that their thinking about "whiteness" was very similar to those who had done quite of bit of reading or research, yet they were uncertain that what they were talking about was the same thing. Thus, there seems to be a continuum for educators regarding the comfort level they have with the concept of whiteness. And this comfort level seems to be largely based on whether the participant comes from an academic context or from a community-based or consulting organization.

Anderson raises the question that "whiteness" may be a machination of the academy. He notes that whiteness comes from primarily an academic context, and that he has little information on this concept through his consulting and community organizing work. In addition, he wonders whether this new focus on whiteness has a class connotation as well. For Anderson, the notion of "whiteness" is somewhat inaccessible. In his words, the language of whiteness is "high falutin'" and may itself support a form of discourse that is privileged and privileging. And while his responses to my questions were often similar to those who indicated that they had a good understanding of "whiteness," he perceives himself as not having a good understanding of "whiteness." The questions he raises about whether the concept is elitist in an intellectual or class-based context are largely outside the scope of this dissertation. However, Anderson raises a question about whether the notion of whiteness is accessible in a way that helps the cause of anti-racism educators in their work. This more overt question of its accessibility is important to the focus of this research because whiteness as a way of thinking about the history and role of white people in perpetuating racism is only useful in anti-racism

education if it can be easily understood and applied. We will return to the issue of accessibility in the following chapter.

The relationship between racism and whiteness is the other continuum that these educators' responses appear to inhabit. For some of them, the concept of whiteness is the same as racism. There is no difference. For others, the concept of whiteness is related to but somewhat different from racism. How these educators think about the relationship between racism and whiteness can be important information as to how their thinking frames their approach to teaching. For example, if the notion of whiteness is closely coupled to the concept of "white culture," educators might focus on the various aspects or dimensions of culture and support participants in making links between these aspects of white culture and how they support a system of white superiority and dominance. And that focus might be different from an educator who focuses on how culture is connected to racism and how he or she supports participants in making links between cultural racism and its effects of white people and people of color. While an examination of how these forms of thinking manifest in an actual class or workshop is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the participants offered useful information about how their thinking about these issues frame how they teach.

Some of these educators indicate that racism and whiteness are synonymous from their perspective. From this perspective, both racism and whiteness are about exclusion, deprivation, segregation and violence. David suggests:

> I really think whiteness and racism are the same thing. I'm not really sure how to explain that, but they're both privilege, they're both power, they're both.... There would be no need for the concept of whiteness if it wasn't for the purpose of stratifying people by race. It's funny.... It sort of makes me think of people in my classes or workshops who talk about, you know, why shouldn't there be a white student union? Or why shouldn't there be a white studies department if there's

> going to be a black studies department? And these comments again, I think, are symptoms of whiteness, or symptoms of racism. I mean the whole university is a white studies department, the whole university is a white student union, and it's just the privilege that puts people in a position not to be able to see that.

David highlights a fundamental idea for both whiteness and racism – the purpose is to give a group of people access to power and privilege while simultaneously denying access and disadvantaging a different group of people. Further, he notes that the privileging aspect of whiteness creates a condition in which white people are not able to see the impact of their thinking. Both whiteness and racism are fundamentally about power differences, and David sees these two concepts as essentially the same thing. David notes that this was not always the case:

> I think if you were to have asked me 10 years ago, I would have said whiteness is just a racial category. I may have said it's a category of a group of people that are privileged by race, but I don't think I would have equated it with racism.

David's thinking about the relationship between racism and whiteness has evolved over time. Now, both of these concepts reference how white people are not able to see the impact of their privilege. Further, for David, the notion of whiteness also now includes an analysis of how capitalism and classism supports the continuation of racism. David notes:

> I think at one time I would say that class or race that I understood them much more as separate issues, and I didn't really have the connection of class and capitalism, to whiteness as I do now.

David notes that from his perspective there was a connection between race and class but it was indirect and loosely defined. Whiteness, on the other hand, has a strong class connotation. White people, as a group, have engineered the economy for their benefit and continue to reposition and redefine whiteness in order to maintain the status quo.

Jackie notes that she views whiteness and racism as essentially the same thing as well. The difference between David's and her view, however, is that for her, the emphasis

on locating white people in the system of racism (examining whiteness) allows white people to engage in the conversation about racism in a fundamentally different way. It reframes the conversation. She offers:

> I think we're talking about the same thing, but we're not framing it as kind of race and racism and the history of people of color, and we're doing it, but we're not framing it in that way, and I think that there is in some way a way that white students can enter into a dialog when they finally get to the place where they get that whiteness is about race and racism AND that being white isn't this kind of intangible, invisible, non-entity thing and the only thing when you're talking about racism, you're only talking about people of color. When they finally make that "aha moment" and they think they can understand, as white people, their connection into this whole conversation about race and racism, it becomes really significant.

This fundamentally different way is principally about expanding the focus of the impact of racism on people of color to include the intentionally covert history and legacy of white culture, ideology, and power in maintaining the status quo. Jackie believes that by doing so, white students are able to connect to this "conversation about race and racism" in a more personally significant manner because they can "plug into" the conversation.

Diana also sees racism and whiteness as similar in meaning but framed differently. For Diana, the idea of teaching from a whiteness perspective means that she locates white people from the onset. She offers:

> I think in the past when I talked about race and racism, or racism in discrimination and certainly individual racism, cultural racism, institutional racism, the whole gamut, the angle on that was look at the ways in which ... I had students look at the ways in which people have been disadvantaged, people of color; and how they have been discriminated against and continue to be to this day. What I do now is look at racism, not from the angle of look who doesn't get stuff, but look who does get stuff. So, instead of looking at "look at how people of color are disadvantaged," we don't do that. We look at the way whites have been advantaged, and that's I think the fundamental difference between teaching from a whiteness perspective.

Other educators believe that racism and whiteness are interrelated, but they also denote different issues. For some, their definition of whiteness encompasses notions of white people's beliefs and assumptions, attitudes, and behaviors – and racism is the inevitable outcome of whiteness. In this context, whiteness is seen as an examination of the people who developed, implemented, and reinforce racism, whereas racism is an examination of the dynamics of this system and its effects (particularly on people of color). Further, teaching from a whiteness perspective locates the teacher, writer, or educator in the overall system. The previously unnamed and unidentified are named and identified. For example, when discussing the issue about teaching multicultural education to pre-service teachers, Sandra noted that it is important for educators to raise the issue of whiteness in the overall system: "You know the fish can't feel the water because it is in it. So my response to that is okay, so what's the water? That's whiteness." From this perspective, Sandra believes that by explicitly naming how whiteness is present, it locates white people (as well as people of color) in the conversation.

Shelly also related a story about the importance of understanding the difference between whiteness and racism. In her story, Shelly tells the experience of a colleague of hers who teaches a class and was confronted by the students for not naming her own viewing point as well as point of view. Shelly offers:

> I was speaking with a woman that we both know who teaches a class in the department, a white woman, and she was talking about how she got challenged by students in her class for not de-centering her whiteness in the creation of her syllabus, and she said because she had laid out the syllabus as "teaching students this, teaching students this, …" and then she had this whole section on teaching students of color. And so they challenged her and they said "how come this is all about teaching students, but this section is about teaching students of color, so who are these other students" like, why are students of color picked out about this thing. She said, "You know, they were totally right. I hadn't looked through this lens."

While this example may rightly be considered an example of white privilege or racism, in a larger context, it is an example of whiteness in that from this lens, the question that gets raised is, "Who does the framing?" and what are the implications of that for reinforcing a system of white hegemony?

Living with Uncertainty and Remaining Hopeful

As these white anti-racism educators discussed the influence of whiteness on their own teaching of it, the sense that whiteness is a persistent and somewhat intractable problem was constant. They confided that sometimes they wonder if racism will ever be vanquished, and noted that they were certain that if it ever were to be, it certainly would not be during our lifetimes. And yet, having come to an understanding that whiteness, in Brad's words, is about "deadness," working toward a world free of racism is one of the most life affirming things one can do. There is a palpable sense of hope and optimism in the words of these educators. And this sense of hope was clearest when they talked about the change they see in participants or in organizations. Not only do their words express a sense of optimism and excitement when they reflect on how people and organizations have changed as a result of confronting whiteness, their entire energy shifted during the interviews. They smiled and their faces lit up or, for some of the phone interviews, they talked faster and their tone changed. It was clear that whiteness framed their sense of hope and uncertainty, and both elements influenced how they thought about their work. I was often reminded during these interviews of the Maya Angelou quote about how this is always, simultaneously, about how far we have come and how far we have to go.

Their uncertainty about the future of liberation from racism manifested itself in several ways. On one level, their uncertainty was apparent in wondering if their "approach" was the right approach. Should we talk about whiteness if it only re-centers white people in the conversation when the point of examining whiteness is so that it moves white people out of the center of the conversation? David wondered:

> There's sort of this ongoing debate right now about whether....you know, you have the new abolitionists who are talking about abolishing whiteness and the more we continue talking about whiteness the more we end up reasserting whiteness. Then you have other people who are saying we need to start talking honestly about whiteness. I don't really know.

If the point of whiteness is to make apparent that which has been transparent and to call out how white people are intimately tied to the continuing oppression of people of color, then how does one do this without having white people take over the conversation? More specifically, if we create space so that white people can give voice to their experience of the upside of racism, will they ever stop talking? Diana noted:

> This is about you [as a white person]. We usually hear, "I'm tired of learning about people of color and their problems." You can other-ize it rather than you're sort of the central figure here. So, whites as the central figure is odd in some ways, but central nonetheless. I don't know. It just seems to work.

And while it "just seems to work," David's question is important to consider. Particularly in a time and place where people of color continue to struggle to access power, opportunity, resources, air space and so on, can this be done in a way that changes the fundamental power dynamic, or can white people not help themselves from taking over the game and thus reasserting whiteness? David's internal questioning is powerful and goes to the heart of this uncertainty that white anti-racism educators expressed.

Another way this uncertainty was expressed was through white anti-racism educators wondering whether there really can be an end to whiteness and racism? As is

noted above, one of the teaching goals is to support people in determining a vision for a racism-free world. However, several educators shared that there is a small voice that wonders if such a thing is possible. In a previous section, I raised David's question whether whiteness can be abolished given its connection to capitalism and classism. In that section, he notes:

> I also don't know, as long as capitalism is in place, if there's any hope for racism to not be in place because capitalism, at its roots, is about competition for limited resources, and as long as stratification is in place and there's competition for limited resources, I just don't see how.

I return to his question here because of its connection to this larger question about the ability for whiteness to be abolished. If racism is tied to classism (and other forms of oppression), then is a world free of racism possible? Several of these educators expressed a similar question. While the importance of having a vision for a racism-free world is important to hold out to their participants, it remains a question that anti-racism educators need to work through themselves. Diana suggests:

> I don't have the answer to that yet so I'm just going to hold onto this other record, which is sort of "whiteness is this, and blah, blah, blah" and help people come to grips with that, and will it ever be able to be dismantled, you know, people get kind of hopeless about that.

One of the ways in which these educators deal with this uncertainty is by holding on to a sense of hope that change is possible, and that while they might not see the end of racism, their task is to move the project further toward that end. One of the participants likened it to Gaudi's church in Barcelona, Spain. Gaudi knew he might not see its completion, and even today, workers continue to build this church from the original plans not knowing when exactly it will be completed. Yet, everyone continues to work toward the initial vision of this church. And, one day, the work will be done. Jane offers:

> I'm only one part of this movement that's not going to transform and it also happens to be,...you know, when you're 53 you kind of try to make yourself feel better....I'm not going to transform society overnight, but we've got to keep doing this work so that we keep moving this thing along whatever way we can.

Brad concurs with this notion when he says:

> I think we have to support each other into staying with the complexity and staying with not going to a place of, well, not worrying about the pessimism or optimism that's there, but going to a place of hope in the sense that we may not see how to do it, or when it's going to happen, but the kind of stubborn hope that if enough people stay with the complexity and stay with the work at the various levels of the system and if we can do it in a way that continues, then we can start to make dents in it.

Anderson, too, takes the long-term view:

> Maybe it's [that I am] getting older, but more and more I take such a long-term view of this that I really don't know that it's going to get any better in my lifetime, it may get worse, and yet I'm also very hopeful. I mean curiously, I actually am very optimistic when I work with people and I'm constantly noticing the changes they're making.

Brad suggests that the challenge is staying with the complexity and holding onto hope – that through our various individual efforts the agenda will be furthered. He, Jane, and Anderson believe that change is possible as they, along with others, have seen changes from staying with the complexity. For example, Jane shared that "the fun part is that I can impact that, and you know, I can meet with the CEO of a company and make that difference."

Both Jane's and Brad's sense of hope counters the voice of uncertainty that sometimes emerges from seeing how much work has to be done to abolish whiteness and get rid of racism. As Jane remarks above, she is not going to transform society overnight, but she will continue working on it. Her understanding of her own whiteness has influenced her teaching of it: she is clear about her intent. For her, each step counts toward the journey. The polarity of uncertainty and hope as a dynamic that influences

their teaching of whiteness is apparent in several of their strategies; these include being clear about one's intent in teaching whiteness; be a hopeful role model that creates space for people to find their voice, engaging in questions that matter and dialogue that engages, and connecting with others for support in the journey.

I noted in an earlier section of these findings that clear goals for engaging in anti-racism education are important for these educators. I return to that here; however, the focus is a little different. While learning goals are important for teaching, the deeper issue for these educators is to remain grounded and clear about one's intent in this work. For example, David shared that his shift to teaching whiteness was accompanied by a concurrent shift in encouraging white people to understand whiteness in their own lives:

> But putting a spotlight on the privilege and power instead of putting the spotlight on the experiences of the oppressed group and forcing them to teach the privilege group, which, in and of itself, is oppression. I think that sort of guides my work a lot. That was a real paradigm shift, practice and in terms of the way I practiced this stuff.

Note David's thinking about white people's responsibility for their learning and how that now guides how he thinks about teaching whiteness. His intent is clear: teaching whiteness while working to not replicate the racism that often accompanies such work. Jackie also notes how understanding whiteness has helped her become clearer about her intent in this work:

> I'm making the whiteness visible, and I'm identifying and saying it, bringing that out and questioning it, I'm then connecting it to systems of privilege, and racism, and how that then plays out. So, I'm connecting it, but I'm not starting there. So, I think that's how whiteness is really present in my teaching.

Several of these white anti-racism educators discussed that they increasingly focus on being a role model that encourages hope and creates space for people to find their voice. Jackie talked about designing a course on whiteness and framed it this way:

> Then we constructed the course based on what their questions were, to help them answer the questions. But, also with this kind of paradigm shift around whiteness and engaging them in thinking about whiteness and white privilege, and asking a lot of critical questions. And questions that we didn't have the answers to, that we're doing the reading and thinking about what are the kind of main things that will help in their understanding, if they thought critically about it, that would help them in their journey in thinking about this issue of race and racism and whiteness. And, then asking those critical questions and allowing for them in papers and responses to struggle with those questions, knowing full well that those are the questions that, when we sit to construct the questions, we have these phenomenal conversations about it. It's really been great. It's been an evolutionary process for me as well, and a journey for me and being able to role model this as a process and not an end zone.

In her construction of this course, she notes that it is important to role model this as a "process" of understanding what whiteness is and one's own whiteness. This is accomplished through supporting students in asking "critical questions" and helping them give voice to those struggles through their papers and journal assignments. Jackie also notes that she and her teaching partner do not have all the answers, but one of their tasks is to put together some reading information and then supporting the students' exploration of that material and thinking through the implications of that material. Jackie, like several other educators, indicates that she is still learning and thinking about whiteness and that one of the best ways she can teach this is to learn with her students.

In the excerpt from Jackie above, she also suggests that one of the ways that she had learned about and continues to learn about whiteness is by engaging with questions that matter – or critical questions, and engaging in these questions through dialogue. David also offers that understanding his whiteness has shifted his teaching style by raising some different questions:

> One of the shifts was moving away from talking about racism as the experiences of people of color, and this thing where the people of color share their experiences with white people to try to convince them that this really exists, and instead to

> engage in the dialogues about whiteness and what is whiteness, and what is white privilege?

Like Jackie, David underscores a shift in both task and process. The task is a fundamentally different set of questions to engage in and the process is one of dialogue rather than lecture or discussion. In this context, the teaching and learning change; whiteness becomes something to be explored through reflecting on one's own experience with whiteness.

A third way this polarity manifests itself in their teaching of whiteness is by their reaching out to others for support and encouragement. The challenges of engaging in this work are tremendous, as Tim asserts:

> It's very scary because as white educators we are interrupting our own culture and basically a culture is what gives us our support, so it's like burning our bridges, and if we don't have a support network to fall back on then we're in the middle of the bridge that we're burning, and we just fall into the river kind of thing.

To not "interrupt our own culture, however, is to give in to white privilege. People of color do not have this; it is one of the ways in which white privilege serves to keep whiteness in place. But Tim's suggestion is not about whether or not to do this, but how to do this. And he notes that being connected with one another is vital so that one can challenge and not fall victim to the lure of white privilege. Tim continues:

> As a white anti-racist you need to be able to have a support network of other white anti-racists, also other people of color who are going to encourage you in these actions and activities, and also kind of pick you up when you get hurt by doing them.

Brad also highlights the importance of being supportive of each other to "stay with the complexity" and, like Tim, not opt out of the important work:

> I think we have to support each other into staying with the complexity and staying with not going to a place of, well, not worrying about the pessimism or optimism that's there.

Jackie also highlights the important of a support network. Her take on this is somewhat different from Tim's and Brad's take. Jackie notes that teaching white people about whiteness can result in some measure of resistance to such efforts. Having a support network provides one "safe space" to explore questions about content and process, and what it means "to do this work":

> I think having a support network is really required. It's exhausting, it can be hard and tiring, and I think one of the things that has been really helpful about teaching this class and again, two weeks ago I was saying I'm done teaching this class, and I am done co-teaching, it's way too much work. But, on the flip side of that, I think one of the most significant things about doing this work is in the conversations [with my teaching partner] I have had about what it means to do this work.

Their ability to have support from others encourages them to continue this work – remaining hopeful about the meaning of this work and its impact on others.

Managing Anxiety with Competence and Humility

A third theme that emerged as these educators talked about teaching whiteness and how their understanding of their own whiteness has influenced their teaching is the questions that rise regarding their ability to competently teach these issues. They discussed the anxiety that is present sometimes in teaching whiteness and how they manage that anxiety by continuing to learn more about whiteness and remaining humble. Specifically, they noted that they try to stay open, often self-disclosing their own struggles with whiteness. In addition, they make sure that they plan their lessons carefully and have done the requisite thinking to ensure that the session will be successful. And finally, they work to balance structure with process. In this way, they create a "learning container" that supports openness and curiosity. As I noted above in the section regarding

how they approach their work, these educators understand that they have ego needs but work so that such needs do not take over the teaching process..

The anxiousness that these white anti-racism educators discussed centered on the belief that the field of teaching whiteness is constantly evolving, and that they desire a good grasp of what it is and how it manifests itself in order to teach it. The notion of anxiety in this regard is not about feeling incompetent to teach whiteness, but rather a sense that they continued to struggle with what it means in their own lives and how they could go about addressing it. Early on in the learning process, Jackie had doubts about whether she would know enough to do this work justice; moreover, she still had questions about what would participants think if she made a misstep. She remarked:

> I think all the kind of natural stuff when you begin to think about these issues, you know, what if I say the wrong thing, what if people find out I'm a racist, what if I really am a racist. It's one thing for people to think I'm a racist and that would be horrendous, but what if I actually really am a racist and kind of moving past that. What could people say, "well, yeah that's true." But I think that also feeling like I didn't know enough, and I hadn't thought enough [about it].

Her observation that most white people fear "being exposed" is a primary reason that white people choose to disengage with anti-racism work; further, she suggests that white anti-racism educators have an additional burden or responsibility in that they need to have worked effectively through the guilt, fear, and shame that silences and the feelings of incompetence so that they can support the learning process. Jackie continues:

> I think some of my worst moments in doing this work is when I am all up in my ego about what I've accomplished, and what I know and what I've read and I have to say it's completely and totally meaningless. I think there are plenty of people who have done way more than I have and thought about it way more and to have ego about it is really just kind of a false thing. But, I think that when I am pushed around my own competence or my own value in engaging in this, or whatever it is, and I get caught in my ego that those are some of my least effective times and so my vigilance is also around the ego and what it means to do this work and if it's really about me or if it's about something else.

Jackie notes that her effectiveness as an anti-racism educator is often connected to keeping "her ego in check" and being vigilant in reminding herself that it is a journey. Certainly, this can be challenging to do when one is being "pushed" around his or her understanding or intent. For Jackie, as well as others, feelings of anxiety can best be addressed by continuously learning about whiteness and racism. She concludes:

> I think if you would interview me a year from now, it would probably be really different because it really is all a process, and we struggle with that. If I were to talk in class and put whiteness up on the board and say this is what whiteness is, well somebody would say, "yeah, but..." and so in the process of saying well, what is whiteness and where do you see it and how does it get represented and where is it [I learn as well].

Jackie acknowledges that whiteness is an evolving area of study and understanding, and so the important task of anti-racism educators is to work *with* feelings of competence and knowing oneself and the material rather than *reject* or work *against* the feelings that emerge as other whites and people of color raise questions and struggle with the meaning and impacts of whiteness. When I asked Diana if part of her educational practice is based upon her own evolving sense of learning what whiteness is and what it is not, her response was simply, "Yes."

When I asked further about how one manages the feelings of anxiety that come about from thinking that one does not "know enough" or that one's intentions will be misconstrued, the consistent response was to have a sense of humility about doing this kind of work. I noted this theme in the previous section regarding how these educators approach their work. In this context, the point I wish to clarify is that their belief that humility is an important aspect of doing this work stems from having engaged with understanding whiteness in their own lives. Many of these educators view their own lives

as a kind of laboratory. They are constantly trying to understand more about how whiteness influences their own lives, how racism manifests itself in their relationships, and how this impacts their teaching. Diana summed this up well when she said:

> I mean I think that there's so much about our own privilege and status that we don't know, and to be conscious of it, and cognizant of it is a good thing and then when you least expect it, it reveals to you to be even more. So I think knowing that you don't know it all, that you don't have it all, to have a grasp on it at the moment but you might not later, to be humble. I think these are the things you need if you're going to be teaching this stuff.

Many of these educators' humility comes from having been confronted on their own racism. When asked about what this experience is like, David said:

> Intimidating, horrifying, difficult, painful, but probably the most important experience I've ever had. It's in some ways horrifying to have this group of colleagues that would just really call me out on stuff, and in another sense it's such a gift and the question each week became would I, even if I didn't agree with it in that moment, would I hear their feedback and reflect on it?

And from those experiences, these educators have come to understand the value of humility in this work. As Diana notes:

> I think what's worked for me is realizing that I don't have it all, and I think that's probably true of any good teacher. And especially with this topic, this area, this angle, this is fairly new and evolving every minute and the angle depending upon where you stand and what part of the country and in what country you stand in. You've got to not hold on too tight, that we're on shifting sand here in terms of, you know, once you think you've got it, something changes on the racial mainstream, and you no longer have it.

Shelly also concurs with this assessment, noting:

> I think maybe I've come to grips a little bit, or that it's more okay for me to be vulnerable maybe, or for me to be humble, or to say, "You know what, I really screwed up, or I really don't know how to do this."

To understand more about how these white anti-racism educators manage these feelings of anxiety in order to teach with a sense of humility, I asked how this influenced their teaching specifically. They noted that because of their understanding of their own

whiteness, they disclose more about themselves, "do their homework" on these issues, and provide enough structure and process so that participants can uncover their own racism. They suggested that by disclosing their own challenges and questions around these issues, it not only role models helpful group behaviors and creates more space for others to self-disclose, it also sends an important message to participants that the educator is still on the journey. By "keeping current" and doing one's homework before one steps into the room to do this work, one stands a better chance of raising helpful questions and feeling more secure about the potential terrain that could be covered. Also, they noted that having a good balance between structure and process can support one in noticing what is in the room and working with that dynamic rather than trying to control what happens.

Anderson's reflections on the value of self-disclosure are fairly representative of the participants in this study, and so I will focus primarily on his voice here. Anderson discussed the value of disclosure noting that by being open about one's own journey in learning about whiteness and uncovering how it manifests in one's own life, the educator is humanized and made more accessible to participants. The relationship deepens and trust is enhanced by engaging in self-disclosure. It also sets the stage for the giving and receiving of feedback and further self-disclosure. Since whiteness is at once systemic and personal, revealing more about oneself as a white anti-racism educator helps participants make important connections. Moreover, such self-disclosure, when done well, is both permission-giving and freeing. Anti-racism educators do not feel like they must maintain some distance or a façade; they too are imperfect and are learning about whiteness even as they teach it. Anderson commented:

> It feels very comfortable for me to talk about my own racism, and the mistakes I'm making. I kind of did it the other day as I was facilitating a meeting. I had a hunch there was something funky I was thinking. I was with a colleague and so I said, "You know, I think this is a rescue and basically because it's a mixed race group, with different statuses and mixed gender," and I say that "I guess I'm worried that we're taking up too much of the vice presidents' time (who are all white men). I'm afraid we're taking up too much of their time by reporting out this information that they had already heard in a previous meeting." And I said, "I think there's a rescue in this," and I talked that all out and my colleague said to me. "And (she referenced an African American woman) and her time is not valuable?" And, I said, "Oops! There it is, there it was, you're right! Boy, what an assumption I was making, huh?"

Anderson's recounting of this story is instructive in a number of ways. First, his self-disclosure was "real-time" and in the moment. He was not bringing up a story that happened some time before, but something that he was thinking in the present moment that supported the learning goal. His self-disclosure was somewhat strategic and served the overall learning goals of the group. Second, he is self-forgiving in this example. He does not beat himself up about it but acknowledges that he is still on the learning journey. Third, rather than be confronted by someone else, he took responsibility by taking the first step. This can be an act of self-empowerment and certainly allowed him to be somewhat in control; he didn't need to be "embarrassed" as he was giving voice to a suspicion he had regarding his own thinking and behavior. Fourth, he was able to effectively manage the anxiety that comes with not feeling competent in the work by replacing it with a different emotion. In this example, Anderson is curious about his thinking and behavior; he has a "hunch" that something "funky" is going on, and so he names it. He invites others to examine his thought process with him and make sense of it together. Through his curiosity, data is disclosed, thinking is examined, and trust is enhanced. Finally, Anderson notes that he is comfortable with being open and vulnerable, and that by working on both of those things, he actually becomes more courageous and

competent. Other educators also noted that they are working on being more self-disclosing as there is important value for himself or herself as well as the participants. Brad remarks:

> I'm getting more selective, more conscious about how I'm using myself with people around my emotions, my experiences, my sharing experience. One of the ways I use myself is disclosing what's going on inside myself because I think, and I work hard at it.

Brad goes on to say that he works hard at it because it is an important component of enhancing one's competence in this work. For all of these educators, the use of self-disclosure in a useful mechanism to attend to anxiety or feelings of (in)competence.

A second way in which these educators have learned to manage anxiety and feelings of competence in teaching whiteness is by being very prepared. While they acknowledged that one can never be "prepared enough" and that issues will emerge in the course of their work that take them by surprise, having done one's "homework" is important in doing this work well, and ultimately, increasing one's competence to do this work. Jane notes:

> I mean the issue is...particularly in corporations, I don't get too many shots at this work, so I will not do an event unless I've done all my homework, and I'll put more time in the front end before I even get in the room because I want people walking out of there a certain way.

She continues:

> I no longer just show up. It's back to what conversations we've had. It's back to the structure: I give people pre-reading, interviews, all those things really get people ready to move into the room.

Jane focuses her work on what participants bring into the room, and since participants have been thinking about what Jane has asked them to consider, she has some notion of what will be explored during their time together. Jane notes that experience has taught

her that teaching whiteness in this manner yields important rewards for both her and the participants. Jackie also noted that having done their homework, she and her teaching partner were better prepared for what the students might want to examine. She explains:

> We really did some rethinking about it this year because neither of us were happy about the last class. It was painful. One of the things we did in our reconstruction was look at what are the major questions if you're talking about whiteness and starting from that place, and then we did something kind of very different, which is, we came up with what we thought were the questions, and then put together a reader, but we didn't put together a syllabus. We just put together a reader, and chose a book based on what we believed that regardless of what they come up with, they were going to need this kind of information. Then on the first day of class we engaged in activity in terms of what is whiteness and what are your questions. What do you want to find out? What do you want to know in this class? We took all of those questions, and we sat with them, and we moved them around, and we put them into categories, and they were basically the same questions that we had, interestingly enough. Then we constructed the course based on what their questions were, to help them answer the questions. But, also with this kind of paradigm shift around whiteness and engaging them in thinking about whiteness and white privilege, and asking a lot of critical questions. And questions that we didn't have the answers to, that we're doing the reading and thinking about what are the kind of main things that will help in their understanding, if they thought critically about it, that would help them in their journey in thinking about this issue of race and racism and whiteness. And then asking those critical questions and allowing for them in papers and responses to struggle with those questions, knowing full well that those are the questions that, when we sit to construct the questions, we have these phenomenal conversations about it. It's really been great. It's been an evolutionary process for me as well, and a journey for me and being able to role model this as a process and not an end zone.

In this excerpt, Jackie notes that the students in the class come up with the questions they want to explore, and "interestingly," the students' questions were her questions too. While initially this may not seem like they had overly planned for this, it is clear in her retelling of their process that a lot of thinking actually went into the design of this course. Their familiarity with the topic allowed them to anticipate most, if not all, of the questions that might arise as they co-constructed the syllabus together. And while she acknowledges that she does not have all the answers to the questions (an act of self-

disclosure), she and her teaching partner have worked to create a reader that will hopefully address most of the questions they raise. Their intentional strategy does one other important thing – it moves the focus from "the teacher has the answers" to "we have a lot of questions." Students were engaged in coming up with the questions they wanted answers to, and their involvement in co-creating the syllabus likely impacted their level of investment and interest in the course as well.

Jane concludes by noting that the explosion of information regarding whiteness has supported her in reflecting on her own practice as a white anti-racist educator. She offers:

> And the other thing I would say that I've really become....just in terms of understanding whiteness at a deeper level is I think we've been fortunate to have the kind of writing research and just the proliferation of things that I've learned that weren't available 30 years ago.

The research and development of additional work in this area helps these educators attend to feelings of "not having it all" in order. As an emerging field of inquiry, new ways of thinking about old questions will develop and this information will influence how they teach whiteness.

A third way in which these educators work through questions about their skills and ability is through attending to structure and process. Again, Anderson's voice highlights the balance of these two and how both structure and process support him in reflecting back the anxiety that gets directed at him as the educator. In speaking of structure, Anderson offers:

> Twelve-step is very structured, and that provides a container for people in 12-step to do what they need to do. It's structure in terms of what you say and what you don't say it, how you say it, the order in which you say it, the amount of time you get to speak, on and on. I found that, for me, that structure was really helpful.... I

> do believe that many white people are very, very scared about doing any work around race, and so it might be that a lot of structure is helpful.

In this excerpt, he speaks specifically about how his involvement in a 12-step process has supported his coming to an understanding of an addiction; yet, the important aspect of this quote is that his thinking about the 12-step process is akin to the important work of anti-racism education with white people. One of the valuable aspects of a 12-step process is how the structure provides the means for participants to take responsibility for their lives; the structure reflects back the feelings and issues the group brings to it. In a similar way, providing a "safe" container for participants to explore whiteness helps move both educator and participants past anxious feelings to a space where they can do "what they need to do." Many of these white anti-racism educators noted that the design of the learning event is an important way of influencing the outcomes, and that educator competence is both in terms of content and the design of a helpful process.

Compassion and Understanding Guides the Journey

A fourth way in which their understanding of their own whiteness influences their teaching of it is by have a deep compassion and understanding for the individual and collective journeys that other white people are on. This is not to say that these educators shirk their responsibility for holding others to account for racism, but to acknowledge that most of the people they encounter, most of the time, are working diligently on trying to understand whiteness and determine how they should proceed. Diana remarks:

> But, over the years, graduates would say, they'll send me e-mails, and say that course was the most profound thing I've ever experienced; and I'm still learning. So, it's happened. People now have a point of view, you know, students say, "You ruined life for me because I can't see things the other way any more." Which I love, because you know, once you get this perspective, you can't not have it. You

> cannot not see the inequality now that you know how to see it. You can see it and turn your back on it, but you can't not see it. And, I think many people have picked up that ball and gone with it and that's been satisfying.

So, many people are struggling with this issue, and since these white anti-racism educators are themselves struggling to understand it better, there is a sense of compassion for what the journey entails. These anti-racism educators shared that they have come to a place of "loving" the participants who are willing to engage in the dialogue. This was a theme that was present in each of the interviews, and was particularly highlighted when we spoke of what has changed for them as they consider teaching whiteness.

Having compassion and empathy for what learners are attempting to do is manifested in several specific ways for these educators. First, they are able to identify with the fear, sense of loss, and costs of whiteness that white people inevitably go through as they struggle with these issues. Second, they assume good intentions on the part of other white people engaged in these issues. Third, they work toward being "generous" with time and attention, trusting that people will meet them half way. And finally, they "stay on their side" of these issues as much as possible, and accept things for what they are. In concert, these four ways in which these educators' understanding of whiteness has influenced how they show compassion to other white people.

Several of this study's participants spoke eloquently about how they had re-examined what they lose or what the associated costs of whiteness are when they began to reconsider racism from a whiteness perspective. Moreover, they reconsidered their relationships with people of color and with other whites. Understanding what is at stake because of the existence of whiteness provided them a different type of awareness about

what other people (white people, in particular) might be experiencing. I return to Anderson's story to help illuminate several important points:

> I began to feel quite lonely for other white men, and realized that my teachers from the late mid-70s on were usually white women and people of color. And even though I'd been around a lot of white men in the National Organization for Changing Men, I don't know that I ever considered any of them really my teachers.... I was very much in a phase of not liking myself as a man, and not liking other men. But, I have a hunch that I recycled into that phase and focused it on white men. There were men of color I was friends with and gay men, but straight white men, I don't know that they eluded me, I don't know quite what it was. I may have been in an anti-straight white male phase. So, there are two things then...one is African American colleagues, and one in particular, who said basically said to me, "You need to learn how to love and support and challenge other white men, but to challenge them from a place of really loving them" that was my interpretation. And I was aware of not being able to do that because I was so angry at white men.

Anderson's story about being angry with other white men inhibited him from reaching out to other men because of sexism and racism (both his and others). It took a friend to push Anderson to consider that in order to challenge other white men, he needed to be able to do it from "a place of really loving them." In this case, racism did not inhibit him from developing close relationships with men of color, but his feelings did create a barrier to developing relationships with other white men. And, in time, he began to sense a real loneliness as he struggled with understanding his own whiteness. Anderson notes that there was another incident that supported his shift in thinking. He continues:

> The second is, I recall, this is one epiphany for sure, I was at a… week-long program of about 50 white guys, about 50 men of color, and it was some attempt to do some cross-racial building and community building, and I actually don't know how clear the organizers were about dealing with race, but that said...there's a moment in the middle of the conference where I remember we had these open forums, these two maybe a Latino and an African American man are standing up and fighting, and really having a very principled disagreement, but I remember they were looking at each other and holding each other somehow, not physically, but in their tension, and they may have even literally been saying "I'm not gonna let you go." And, then I remember watching two white men get up, and have also an argument, and the way that I recall it now is that one man basically said, "Fuck

> you" to the other guy, turned his back and turned away. And, somehow, that moment for me said to me, "Jesus! Look what we're willing to do to each other, let alone what we do to people of color. We just blew each other off ,and we don't give a shit." And there was something so painful about that moment that I said, "I do not want to do that," and I must have made a decision in that moment or shortly thereafter saying, "I am not gonna do that because I've seen myself doing that."

Anderson recalled that the interaction between the two men was painful to watch, and even relaying this story several years later the tone of his voice was sad. Whiteness costs white people as well as people of color, and Anderson's reflection on the costs to whites suggests that this was an important awareness for him as he considered the implications in his own practice. From Anderson's perspective, one way not to engage in that behavior is to operate more from a place of love and compassion.

Reconsidering what one is missing as a result of not addressing whiteness offers a potentially powerful lesson in the value of alliance building and trust development. Jane offers that coming to terms of what whiteness costs is an important step in working toward a vision of social justice. During one point in the interview, Jane offered a short story that highlighted the cost of whiteness for white people:

> When people really get to an understanding that says the more diversity I can interact with, the more I understand my responsibility, I don't have to hold myself back and feel bad about that, but I can engage more fully. I'll never forget a woman talking about how she had an African American neighbor, and she never asked him for a cup of sugar because she didn't want to bother him and didn't realize that her not bothering him was actually keeping her from having a relationship, and this is on a very small level, you know, this is like the interpersonal thing. You know, it's that kind of level of "if you can't talk about how much you're missing," and so many whites don't want to go there because they're fearful of what they'll hear, instead of it being "if I lean into this and I'm able to really own my part of racism and take responsibility and make some changes, how much more I can have, not less."

Jane notes here that fear of what white people might hear (or experience) inhibits them from reaching out and expanding their circle and making change. Whiteness keeps fear in

place – unnamed and unaddressed. Often this fear of considering the implications of whiteness in one's life is palpable. Anderson comments:

> I just thought of one other thing that I know is a change for me, and I'm finally being able to see it. My colleagues of color used to see it years ago. They would see the pain in white men, and I couldn't see it. Now, I see it. I see the terror in white men, the fear. I see the pain, and I notice that, and maybe I don't do anything with it, but I notice it, and if I get a chance I might try to figure out a way to do it.

And his comment takes us full circle to his previous sharing of his anger with white men. It becomes difficult, if not impossible, for one to see the pain and fear in another person if one cannot get through the anger that blocks the relationship. On some level, Anderson's anger with other white men prevented him from seeing the fear and pain in their faces and in their words. Recognizing the essential humanity of the other person and working with him or her from a place of compassion and understanding allows for old wounds to heal and new relationships to form. Most importantly, it creates space for white people to engage with racism and take responsibility.

Sandra concurs with Anderson's and Jane's assessment that understanding the cost of whiteness as an anti-racism educator allows for one to have more empathy and understanding for what other white people may be experiencing. Sandra believes that this sense of loss or grief is actually one of the drivers of white people's reluctance or resistance to dealing with racism directly and acknowledging how they are implicated in whiteness. Sandra offers:

> There are costs, I think, to not being ethnic and to being white for many people. I would [think] actually, in some cases, the costs may outweigh the benefits. Interestingly, I think that's part of where the resistance to other people maintaining it links with identity, I think, racial and ethnic identity. I think part of the resistance from white people comes from the sense of their own loss, you know, the perception that we don't have a culture, which couldn't be further from the truth, but that is the perception because everybody obviously does, we just

> don't know it any more than African Americans know their culture. So, in some ways, I would say many white Americans and many African Americans share that, their desperation to understand where they came from. Whiteness just hurts us in many ways.

Sandra notes that this loss stems from believing that white people either have no culture or have lost their culture. Like Jane and Anderson indicate above, Sandra notes that dealing with this sense of loss, and the resultant pain and fear that accompanies it, is important as one addresses whiteness and its implications for white people and people of color.

A second way in which compassion and understanding operates in the teaching practice of these white anti-racism educators is through assuming good intent on the part of white people. This theme was not consistent across all of the educators, but emerged for a couple of them. I felt it important to include here because of its relationship to having empathy for the learning process. In showing compassion, one valuable way is to approach learners as uninformed or misinformed, but well intentioned. As noted above, many of these white educators have themselves struggled with how whiteness shapes institutions and relationships. As Jackie shared before, there is a certain amount of fear that one has to work through in addressing whiteness. Assuming good intentions and confronting racist attitudes and behavior are not mutually exclusive; instead, assuming good intent shapes the way in which one might engage and challenge someone. Anderson offers an example:

> I assume that people are well-intentioned. So that if someone were to say the term "colored people" for instance, I would just assume that they haven't been around folks who would tell them otherwise, or they're trying to make sense of this new language "people of color," and they think it's the same as "colored people," so I assume that they're well intentioned, and I would sort of come at it from that, which might mean saying, instead of saying, "You know, that's the wrong term to use," correcting them, I might say, "You know, I know you don't want to get into

> trouble, but some folks are really going to object to something you just said, so can I tell you about it so you don't get yourself into trouble?" They say, "Yeah" and I'll say, "Well, this is the term you might want to use for this reason." I might come at it that way. I might even do it privately so I don't embarrass them publicly.

Note that Anderson still provides feedback and challenges the behavior, but the approach shifts and in doing so, creates an opportunity to build trust and deepen the relationship.

Building trust and deepening the relationship does not work just between two white people. One example of how compassion and understanding operate cross-race is in the care and generosity of spirit with which many people of color engage with white people. The challenge is to do this without relying upon people of color to teach white people about their racism, which only serves to reinforce a racist dynamic. However, there is an important history of people of color showing compassion and understanding as white people work through the implications of whiteness and addressing how racism operates in their lives. Sandra observed:

> So, despite my best effort on a daily basis, it's not in the self-interest that most people of color take a risk on white folks. I understand that. I get that. And yet, all my life, I have had people of color spend tremendous amounts of time working on me to build my consciousness and my commitment, and many other people who don't really care about my consciousness or commitment who just befriended me, and I said that even though it's completely against the manifesto in our work for people to do this, I think at this point in my life, I really appreciate it when people throw caution to the wind and take something on faith and just decide that they're willing to be in the moment with me, as a friend or as a colleague, and understand all the vulnerabilities and the mistakes and lack of understanding, and experiences that I have, and I said I know that that violates all the rules, that's not what we're supposed to say, but I enjoy the relationships that I have with people… when people can connect on a human level and not let the reality of our own limitations need a reason not to connect or a reason to put ideology before humanity, I'm impressed by that. That's something I'm trying to learn how to do, with white folks and people of color alike, because consciousness doesn't follow racial lines.

This excerpt from Sandra highlights the value of assuming good intent. Certainly, the reason that people of color have "spent tremendous amounts of time" supporting her

growth and development is partially due to Sandra's intention to work on her racism. The desire to support her development would have disappeared if she were not well intentioned, and this is part of what Anderson addresses in the above comment when he notes that one way in which understanding his whiteness has influenced his teaching of it is through having greater compassion for the learning process through assuming positive intent.

A third aspect of how compassion and understanding operates for these white anti-racism educators is through an approach of generosity. Generosity in this context is the willingness to be open and trusting. It differs from "assuming good intention" because it is not based on what the other person brings to the interaction but on how the educator chooses to approach the interaction. This notion of "generosity of spirit" emerged several times throughout the interviews, and each time it came up, it was connected with creating more trust in the relationship and giving oneself to that relationship. Jackie named this dynamic directly when she said:

> I think a generosity of spirit in some ways is absolutely required because I don't know how you can do this work if you don't have a generosity without in some way taking away from you. I don't know, I think you need to have a generosity of spirit, and certainly a patience, and part of the vigilance is around ego.

Jackie notes that such an orientation is required to do this work effectively. As Jackie has grappled with understanding whiteness, she has come to understand that teaching this is intense and personal and requires a great deal of energy. For her, as well as others, approaching the task of teaching whiteness with a greater sense of generosity has increased her capacity to remain engaged and energized.

Anderson shared a story about being open to what was happening in a group and that by giving of himself, trust in the relationship was enhanced. In this excerpt, a generosity of spirit pervades this interaction:

> And that [12-step program] had a profound impact on me in terms of my, I think, my humility and my seeing that other people are where they are. They're doing the best they can. We all are. So that now if I look at the work I do with white men, I think, for instance, of a client I've been working with for about a year, or two years, where I'm now doing some coaching of the president and the vice-presidents. I see myself as doing a lot of listening, always inviting them if they want to hear my thoughts, being very strategic and cautious about when I bring up an issue that is about race, or gender, or class, being patient, and saying, "You know, if I don't get to this one today, I'll just make a note, and it'll come up again, and I'll raise it when it's appropriate"; noticing their resistance and I think being incredibly loving and gentle with them, and respectful. And what's amazing to me is how easy it feels and how they seem to be going with the program in ways that are astounding to me. Now, that's also because of who they are and the organization they are in, and yet, I'm just not fighting them, and they seem to be taking in information about the nature of oppression in ways that astound me. And it's just nice doing it.... I like these guys, even if I don't know that we'd become best friends by any means. I like 'em!

This notion of generosity exists in several different ways in Anderson's story. First, Anderson draws a circle wide enough to encompass himself and his client. Both are in this relationship and trust had developed because of his willingness to take a sincere interest in them. Second, he does not push but invites others into his thought process; again, it widens the circle of their relationship. Third, he indicates that he notices their resistance and responds by being "incredibly loving and gentle with them, and respectful," which can only come from a place of openness, trust, and generosity. Anderson is willing to go above and beyond because they are also willing to step up their shared task. He is willing to spend the kind of time and energy necessary to support their movement, and, in the end, he enjoys the relationships he has with these people.

In a similar context, Sandra notes how her relationship with a man of color helped her to examine the influence of whiteness on her relationships with other people of color and white people. Attending to this has allowed her to reconsider how she enters into those relationships and do it with a greater sense of generosity. Sandra observes:

> So, I kind of just have to live with that being messy, and I think that that's what I'm saying, is that it's a point at which we start to just be able to trust each other, knowing that it violates all the ideological rules of engagement, I think that's where real growth takes place because in some ways he talks about how his relationship with me taught him to learn forgiveness and not forgiveness for the sake of white folks and cops, who at that time he said he hated, but needing to forgive them so that he could heal, not so that we could heal, and how powerful that was. I'm somewhere there with that right now. I try to give a lot more grace than I ever did before.

Sandra asserts that it is in being "able to trust each other" that growth takes place. Forgiveness, healing, and grace all connote a sense of generosity of spirit – a willingness to give of oneself for the greater good (of a relationship or a community). Here, Sandra's exploration of whiteness has led her to rethink how she enters into relationships, and having a sense of compassion for one another provides the necessary space to heal.

A fourth way in which compassion and understanding is manifested in their practice is through acceptance. This notion of acceptance is connected to Sandra's idea of giving "grace" as well as Anderson's approach of noticing his client's resistance but not pushing too much (knowing that another opportunity to address it will return). As these white anti-racism educators have come to understand how the task of "abolishing" or "interrupting" whiteness impacts their teaching of it, they have shared that they have increased their capacity for acceptance. Similar to generosity, "acceptance" is not equal to being permissive in the face of racism; instead, acceptance is seeing things for the way they are. Again, compassion for one another is borne out of accepting things for what

they are. If disappointment results from unmet expectations, then compassion results from the acceptance of how other people "show up" – not having to change or manipulate them into what we need them to be. Interestingly, several of these educators noted that they are most effective when they refrain from pushing people into thinking or acting a certain way. Anderson observes:

> One way to talk about a meditative practice in Buddhism is the acceptance of the way things are, including all of our prejudices, all of my prejudices, and all of others' prejudices, and all of the ways that I and others have been conditioned to be racist, and sexist, and homophobic, and on and on and on. And there's some tranquility that I've experienced as I accept my own shit, and it helps me see others' shit and just let it be what it is, and [not] try to fight it or change it necessarily, I just see it for what it is. That's about the best way I can explain it, I think.

While Buddhist philosophy has influenced Anderson's willingness to be more accepting of people and the way things are, he also notes that as he becomes increasingly skilled in understanding whiteness and how to address it, acceptance of what *is* becomes a more valued strategy.

Jane remarked during her interview, "I think the other place I would say I've really come out of blaming to understanding that this work is about love." In this context, Jane's work has shifted from finding fault to acceptance. Jane remarked that she used to believe that her work was to beat white people up a little bit, and she has shifted to a "more spiritual" way of thinking about her work, which includes accepting what "is" about the work, and the more white people deal with their racism, the more fully human they become. She offers:

> [I was more blameful] because of my own anger and internalized oppression issues, you know. It wasn't to make people feel bad, but I know that was a piece of it. "Look at what we've done," I really think that this is about people have to come at this place having more, not less, and that really getting whites to

> understand the liberation of dealing with their racism helps them be more of a human being, not less of a human being.

Part of Jane's shift has been to focus on her own work and "stay on my side" of dealing with whiteness. In this manner, she can challenge and engage white people, but understanding that whiteness is complex, she can operate from a place of "love" and accept that people are working through these complexities. This notion of "staying on my side" and accepting where people are was a consistent theme when white educators discussed how their sense of compassion and understanding has increased.

Anderson offered two examples that highlight this notion of "acceptance." In both examples, he draws attention to how white anti-racism educators can intervene in a situation and do so from an "accepting" place. While Anderson's Buddhism is clearly present in both examples, so is the change in his thinking about how to be a more effective educator.

> Then, the last thing that I'm thinking of is that there's a wonderful theory that Visions has worked on spinning out of the work of others. It's called Modern and Internalized Oppression Theory. It basically lays out five behaviors that members of dominant groups are likely to engage in, and five parallel behaviors that members of oppressed or targeted groups are likely to behave in. And I know that so well, know it's sort of in me, that I just see it and name it quite quickly, and I find that very helpful because with each of those it allows me two things. It allows me to remember that there's internalized oppression that's feeding modern oppression all the time, and there's a dance going on. So, as I'm doing my work, I know that there's bullshit that women are doing, and people of color are doing, and I stay on my side as much as possible. I stay with my own stuff, and there are very specific, and I think helpful ways, to not engage in the modern oppression behaviors that I know so well I just ....when I notice myself doing some modern oppression behavior, and it happens all the time. Once I see it, I know what to do differently. So, that kind of behavioral stuff is just very much at my fingertips all the time, and I'm constantly working with that and teaching it.

Anderson highlights a specific way of thinking about racism stemming from the work of the Visions consulting group. The aspect that I wish to highlight here is his thinking

about what this information allows him to do: "stay on his side." This way of thinking about racism allows Anderson to focus on his own behavior rather than "otherize" his experience. While Visions' "Modern Racism" is not about whiteness, per se, Anderson's learning about how to think about the work of white people, and of himself in particular, is relevant to this study. Anderson's emerging sense of what whiteness is and how it influences his teaching style has supported his efforts to "stay on his side" and be accepting of what comes. This sense of compassion for white people (and people of color in this instance) allows him to interact and intervene in a substantively different way with his client.

Later in his interview, Anderson shared an example of how he engages in white-on-white anti-racism work. He shared that he often has to push somewhat in order for white people to engage in a conversation about stereotypes and biases toward people of color. Further, white people often express that they "need" people of color in the room to teach them about their racism. White centeredness and normativity are both clearly evident in such an assumption, and Anderson addresses this level of whiteness by raising some of the underlying assumptions that white people have about who holds knowledge about racism, not noticing difference, not articulating biases, or by naming such stereotypes it clearly implicates the messenger. ("You said it, so you must believe and be acting on it.") Anderson offers:

> My thinking is that it [getting rid of one's stereotypes] ain't gonna happen in this lifetime, so the alternative is, "Let's get them on the table." Now, that is a part that's profoundly influenced by my Buddhist practice. Buddhism says in some ways, "Look at what is, not pushing it away, not clinging to it, just noticing it for what it is," and I understand that to mean, in the context of bias, notice that you have biases and examine them, which is scary for some people who have been taught that, and think that, you're not supposed to be biased and to be biased is a bad thing. I don't think it's a bad thing, I just think it is.

Anderson indicates that "looking at what is" – a form of acceptance of the here and now – allows him to change the nature of the conversation and make it less frightening for participants. In this way, white people can "lean into" their fear and distress and begin to explore how whiteness profoundly influences their lives and how racism destroys relationships and lives. In this excerpt, Anderson also normalizes people's feelings in an attempt to help them to reconsider their assumptions. Here too, it requires a great deal of compassion for what other people are struggling with to support them and normalize their fears and anxieties. Anderson employs what he has learned of Buddhism, racism, oppression, and whiteness to serve his client's learning process, and he models a level of self-awareness and understanding about the limits and costs of whiteness.

As these white anti-racism educators have come to a better understanding of whiteness as being principally about ideology, culture, power, and privilege, and how whiteness manifests in their lives, they have also had an opportunity to reconsider different ways of teaching it. While their overall approach to anti-racism education focuses on specific goals, content areas, and process issues, their teaching has also become more nuanced. Love and hope serve as a new approach for creating a "learning container" in which participants can deal with the uncertainties of racism and remain hopeful in the process. Having a sense of humility and self-awareness keeps them grounded from feeling anxious or incompetent – when it comes to whiteness, everyone is on a learning journey. Further, they role model appropriate self-disclosure and openness. And they approach their work with more compassion and understanding by assuming good intentions, being generous with their time and energy, and being accepting of what others bring to the learning journey. In all of these ways, their understanding of whiteness

has influenced their teaching of it, and conversely, their teaching of whiteness has helped other white people (and people of color as well) be more open, responsive, and engaged.

Chapter Summary

This chapter was organized into five sections. The first section briefly introduced the reader to the participants of this research project. Following the four sub-research questions, the interviews focused on four key points in understanding what whiteness is from the perspective of a white anti-racist educator and how it informs their practice. Those four points are the anti-racist educators' early journey, how they describe their teaching and approach to this work, how they define whiteness, and how they believe their understanding of whiteness has influenced their teaching. Thus, the four sections of this chapter following the introduction to the participants were the themes that emerged from the four sub-research questions.

In describing their interest in anti-racism education and journeys as anti-racist educations, the participants described their early awareness of racism. This early awareness came from spiritual and religious values, family influences, relationships with people of color, and participation in anti-racism training. They also described critical events in their development of an anti-racist identity that included participation in anti-racist events, the influence of friendship circles, and personal struggles that were not particularly race-based but supported the development of a critical race consciousness. Many discussed their self-interest in this work as stemming from their spiritual values, being accountable to family or close friends, healing from emotional wounds, and/or this work being aligned with how they wanted to see and be seen in the world (self-concept).

All of these educators currently hold one or more different roles in which they are able to advance their anti-racism work: consulting, teaching, activism, and research. The first three roles predominated, and in particular, full time consultants viewed themselves as teachers, and faculty discussed their consulting work.

Participants shared their approach to and teaching of anti-racism. Following a social justice education framework, I coded the interviews and grouped the codes into themes that aligned with four "theme clusters" that followed the interview protocol: goals, content, process, and teaching style. One of the challenges of developing goals was in being "clear" about what ought and could be accomplished. These educators noted that limited time often put them in a position of having to make difficult choices about what to cover. Most often, however, they felt that learning goals needed to address awareness, understanding accountability, developing a vision for a racially just world, and understanding how to intervene in racism. Content related themes included the history of racism, connections with other forms of oppression, levels of racism (cultural, institutional, and individual), white privilege, and white identity development. Presentations, experiential learning activities, cross-cultural interactions, dialogue, and investigative research were preferred process methods for teaching the content. And in sharing their preferred teaching styles, these educators noted the importance of being a role model, making examples clear and concrete, attending to class pacing, challenging appropriately, having a sense of energy and passion about the topic, as well as a sense of humility.

In describing the meaning of "whiteness," these anti-racism educators talked of whiteness as social construction, culture, power, and privilege. Even those white anti-

racism educators who were less facile with the critical white studies literature identified whiteness as ideology and that it is socially constructed. Beyond an ideology that moves across a continuum from white supremacy to white normativity/invisibility, these educators discussed the fairly pragmatic and tangible aspects of whiteness: white culture, white power, and white privilege. Their grounding in these aspects connects back to their goals of "tracking" whiteness in order to make it both concrete and visible.

Beyond the teaching goals, the content to address those goals, or how these educators "make meaning" of whiteness, most of them offered that notions or feelings of ambivalence, hope, anxiety, and compassion were derived from thinking about how whiteness has impacted their lives and how they felt they should teach it. Several were ambivalent about the distinction between whiteness and racism; moreover, they wondered how much they should focus on "whiteness" rather than racism. Understanding whiteness in their lives had made them less certain about racial justice in their own life times, yet hopeful that change toward a more racially just society will continue. In addition, several admitted feeling anxious about teaching whiteness (because of the depth and breadth of this topic) and so they worked diligently to stay current and competent. Knowing that there is still more to learn about whiteness and racism, however, has led most of them to a place of compassion for other white people and an understanding that the journey is simple but not easy.

The following chapter discusses these findings to answer the primary research question, "*From the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice?*" It covers my observations about each of the four sub-research questions, and how these four areas pull together to answer the primary research

question. In Chapter 6, I summarize the overall research project, offer several conclusions about how this research might impact anti-racism education, and offer recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Utilizing a qualitative approach to this research project meant including the voices and stories of the individual participants. This approach is consistent with a socially just way of including people's voices and points of view (Patton, 1990). I have outlined the major themes that connect and intersect the various stories of these participants and supported these themes with excerpts from the participants' interviews. I hope that these excerpts will provide the reader an adequate account of their perspectives and the thinking that frames their thoughts and ideas. In this chapter, I highlight and extend several of the themes that emerged from the data presented in Chapter 4.

One of the key considerations in examining the findings described in Chapter 4 is the reality that both the interviewer and the subject are never quite able to step out of their cultures. For the participants in this study, development as white people, thinking about the role of whiteness, and their approach to engaging in anti-racist practice all come from a context bound in whiteness. So too are the questions, approach, and lens I employed as the interviewer. Beyond this, whiteness frames the conversation between researcher and participant – even in how whiteness is conceived. I return to this point later in this chapter; however, it is important to underscore the way in which this very topic anchors the findings and discussion.

The findings in Chapter 4 consist of the descriptions of each theme and theme cluster, and are based on the four sub-research questions: (1) how do white anti-racism

educators describe their interest in anti-racism and journey as white educators? (2) how do white anti-racism educators describe their teaching and what is their approach to their work? (3) how do white anti-racism educators describe the meaning of whiteness and what are the underlying themes that account for these views of whiteness? And (4) what themes precipitate feelings and thoughts about teaching whiteness for these white educators and how has their understanding of their own whiteness influenced their teaching? In the discussion of the findings that follows, I tease out some important observations that I made as I examined the material. I will also explore how these observations inform and support one another and relate to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

How White Anti-Racism Educators Describe their Interest in Anti-Racism and Journey as White Educators

In describing their journeys as white educators, these participants shared their early awareness of being white and important events that supported their increasing consciousness and commitment to anti-racism. In many of these accounts, the role of family, friends, and religion figured prominently in their early memories. Many also had experience in an anti-racism training or similar event, or they became more aware of how oppression or violence had impacted their own lives. Beyond their early memories, these other events or "approximating experiences" (O'Brien, 2001) encouraged their interest in social justice work. Their desire to be involved with social justice is supported by a network or structure, most often through friendships or intimate relationships with people

of color, that creates a relatively "safe container" for them to consider their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors about race, racism, and whiteness.

The findings from the first research question suggest some important issues for consideration and discussion. Here I discuss two issues that are relevant in understanding their journeys toward anti-racism education and influence their approach to anti-racism education. First, for each of these white anti-racism educators, people of color played a significant role in their racial consciousness. In apparent contradiction, all of them believe that they (and other white anti-racists) have a role to play in the racial consciousness of other whites. And second, the "hook" for most of these white people to become committed to anti-racism is the opportunity for self-actualization. This finding has important implications for social justice pedagogy. The development of an anti-racist identity that is grounded in addressing self-actualization needs may be one way of reconsidering social justice pedagogy. Here, I explore three mutually reinforcing and overlapping pre-conditions for the development of such an identity: 1) a propensity to be involved in positive social change, 2) high trust relationships with people of color and other anti-racist whites, and 3) the opportunity to reflect on their own growth, which served to support their further involvement in positive social change.

The Role of People of Color

In sharing their stories of the development of their racial consciousness, these white anti-racists noted the importance of their relationships with people of color and these relationships were pivotal in their understanding of race and racism. For David, it was his African American friend, for Anderson it was an African American faculty

member that suggested he teach a course, for Heloise it was her group of friends. Heloise noted in the prior chapter: "But most of the time in a lot of these discussions it would be just sitting around the dinner table with mostly an African American group of people and just sitting and listening." In this passage, Heloise remarks that her evolving racial consciousness comes as a result of listening and learning. Although one could assume that she is with a group of friends who are comfortable engaging in these conversations, it is nevertheless a passive learning that characterizes the relationship in that the white person learns from the person of color. Jackie also shared a similar story about learning from "the pain" of her colleagues of color in graduate level classes. Indeed, their experience mirrors many of the early experiences of these anti-racists in that people of color are placed in the role of teacher (regardless of whether it was done intentionally). Moreover, an unacknowledged question – what did it take for these people of color to trust these white educators? – was unanswered. Did they have to assess the potential risk of being open and vulnerable, and what energy did it require to trust white people and share experiences with them? Since all of these educators became aware of race and racism through the stories of people of color, this is no insignificant issue.

Some of these white educators claim early learning from people of color that are less relational than the stories of Heloise or Jackie (where people of color potentially had a choice to disclose). Some participants recalled early interactions with people of color in which the person of color was in a subordinate position (such as a housekeeper) or they witnessed a person of color being mistreated. In these instances their learning comes as a result of their privileged place as a white person (and upper class). Whiteness creates both the conditions in which these relationships are structured as well as the privileged

knowing that these white educators are able to access. In this case, it would appear that such interactions simply reconstituted whiteness by keeping the power dynamics in place. While these white anti-racists are aware of the implications of these histories, it does not change the basic underlying reality of these situations: white people continue to learn from (and I would argue, look to) people of color about white people's racism. What I mean by this is that whether white people look to people of color to understand the impact and implications of their thoughts and behaviors on people of color, or knowingly learn from their privileged place as white people (and add sex, age, class, etc.), this learning matters – it has material implications for people of color and how whiteness is constructed historically and in the present moment.

Consistently, these white anti-racism educators seek out and have high trust relationships with people of color. While anti-racism work is not the focus nor necessarily the foundation of the relationship, there is an acknowledgement that racism has, on some level, structured the relationship and there is vigilance with regard to whiteness impacting the current relationship. While these white educators were encouraged by friends or mentors of color to address whiteness in their "own" white communities, little information was shared about the impact of whiteness on their relationships with other whites (and how racism may have structured those relationships too).

While people of color figure prominently in all of these white anti-racism educators' stories, none of them cited other white anti-racists as significant to their early learning. This was true even though participants had white anti-racist role models (or stories of white anti-racists) available to them. Thus, the paradox is that while they

learned about racism from people of color, they also expect that other whites can learn about racism from their role modeling as anti-racist whites. Put another way, if so many of these white anti-racists came to this place because of their relationships with people of color, what is the role of white anti-racists? Indeed, a review of the literature offers scant empirical research on the impact of white anti-racists on the racial consciousness of whites.

While answering the question of whether and/or how white people can and do learn about racism from other whites is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the experience of these white anti-racist educators suggests that understanding the impact (or lack of impact) of white anti-racists on the racial consciousness of other whites is important. If this is a trend wherein few white anti-racism educators actually learn to be anti-racist and care about these issues from engaging with other white anti-racists early on, then what is the real purpose of white anti-racism educators?

Having raised these questions, I think it important to point out a few important considerations as well as put my own role as the researcher in this process. First, the available literature suggests that cross-race relationships are an important component of racial awareness and the development of an anti-racist identity (Bowser & Hunt, 1996; Gudykunst, 1998; Reason & Broido, 2005). Second, this is a small sample of white anti-racism educators, and I did not ask everyone, explicitly, if they indeed were able to learn about their own whiteness from other white educators. The inconsistency of questions asked during each interview might account for this finding. Third, this apparent contradiction may owe its genesis to the historical and generational currents that shaped the lives of these participants. Most of these participants became invested in anti-racism

education during a time in history when there were few white anti-racism educators. Current anti-racism education, with its emphasis on white people teaching other whites, and refocusing the "problem" of racism as something that white people need to address is a recent phenomenon (Bowser & Hunt, 1996; Katz, 1978).

Several participants did point out that they now look to other whites for support and encouragement. It might be that white anti-racism educators play a more central role in white peoples' development once they reach a certain level of awareness and activism. I personally do not recall other white anti-racism educators challenging and supporting me early in my racial consciousness. It was not until I understood that I and other whites had information about racism that I understood the value of engaging with other whites about racism and whiteness. I do believe that white people can learn from white anti-racism educators about whiteness. However, I also believe that white anti-racism educators need to be very clear and have a well-thought out value proposition about what white anti-racism educators can bring to other whites' awareness and understanding. Further, I also believe that leaving white people out of the conversation or leaving people of color out of the conversation (as educators, trainers or consultants) reinforces certain assumptions about the nature of racism and who has knowledge; perhaps that is why it is recommended that social justice education be designed with two trainers who can represent the oppressor and oppressed points of view (Griffin, 1997).

The Role of Self-actualization Needs

The second issue that emerges from the findings is that the primary reason for most of these white becoming committed to anti-racism is the opportunity for self-

actualization. Understanding this may have important pedagogical value in that their self-interest in addressing racism is tied into their needs for self-actualization. Some of the participants remarked that they felt more "alive" or "connected" when engaged in addressing racism, while others appreciated the self-learning that accompanies involvement in anti-racism work. Still other participants felt more "whole" when they addressed the issue of whiteness. All of these responses speak to self-actualization needs: the need that humans have to contribute to something meaningful and be successful (however it is defined). For each of these educators, the opportunity to commit their energy to anti-racism and claim an anti-racist identity was an attractive and compelling path toward self-actualization.

The pedagogical issue for white anti-racist educators is the creation of an attractive and compelling anti-racist identity that is able to speak to white people's deepest needs for self-actualization and self-interest. If, as one of my white critical friends noted, a central motivation for white anti-racism educators in addressing whiteness might be "to feel good about our lot," then this becomes a more central issue in how educators address whiteness with white people: to be explicit about the underlying nature of identity and change. This perspective, in some fashion, echoes one of Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn's (2001) criticisms of anti-racism education that the larger aim of the Civil Rights Movement has been undermined by the therapy and identity-based racial "sensitivity training" movement that has evolved since the 1960s. It may be essential that an attractive and compelling anti-racist identity is grounded in the real and material notions of a critical anti-racist pedagogy – one that moves and reframes the discussion from a guilt-based, ego-driven identity development project to one that supports the most

life-affirming aspects of a healthy, responsive, and positive identity that can participate and contribute to a socially just, multicultural society.

One way of conceptualizing how the development of such an anti-racist identity might occur is to explore how these white anti-racist educators came to be involved in their work. Instead of an index of the critical events that led these white educators to develop an anti-racist identity, I highlighted three overlapping preconditions for these white educators: 1) a propensity to be involved in positive social change, 2) high trust relationships with people of color and other anti-racist whites, and 3) the opportunity to reflect on their own growth, which served to support their further involvement in positive social change. These preconditions were present for all participants and suggest that a supportive, reinforcing loop might provide anti-racism educators with a framework for understanding why they became involved in this challenging work. Clearly, whiteness informs and holds these conditions; however, it would seem that only by traveling along and through whiteness is one able to transform it. While the participant group in this study was too small to draw a generalized conclusion, the notion that these three mutually reinforcing preconditions characterized the development of these anti-racism educators' identities offers another piece to the puzzle of creating an attractive, compelling, anti-racist identity.

Involvement in Social Change

The first condition in this overlapping and supportive process is the propensity to be involved in positive social change efforts. Participants, for a variety of reasons, found themselves involved in various social change efforts. These reasons included being

involved in family or social networks that were already engaged in such efforts, having a religious or spiritual base that supported social action, or finding themselves engaged in social change efforts because they were themselves members of an oppressed group of people. Most were involved in the broad current of social action generally before becoming involved in anti-racism efforts in particular.

This condition is supported by O'Brien's (2001) research on "approximating experiences." As I noted above, working in social change efforts because of one's own identity can influence (though not necessarily) one's involvement in other movements for social change. Participants were already involved in various social change efforts before they became anti-racist educators.

Trust Supports Continued Involvement

The question that I considered throughout this project was "What is it about the nature of the relationships these white anti-racism educators discussed that is so transformative?" Through my analysis of the findings, it became clear to me that the role of trust is central to the story these educators shared about their development and interest in this work. While I highlighted the power implications of cross-race relationships earlier, here I want to talk about the nature and role of trust in these white educators' journeys. I would argue that high trust relationships characterized the most critical relationships they have in their development and understanding of whiteness, and ultimately, played the most significant role in their journeys. While trust can be defined in multiple ways, I use a framework espoused by Levering (1998) that trust is comprised of credibility, respect, and fairness.

Credibility is an important aspect of trust. People who are open and accessible, honest, act with integrity and competence (in a work context like teaching) are more likely to be credible to others. Using this framework, a common theme in the findings was that dialogue is seen as a valuable mechanism for supporting white educators' attempts at self-disclosure, open and authentic communication, and accessibility. Dialogue is the preferred way of entering into conversations with these educators. The important distinction in the stories that these educators shared is that their approach to intergroup relations is less focused on debate, didactic forms of communication, or discussion. Their approach focused instead on dialogue (as a form of communication that supports authentic communication and self-disclosure). This approach is consistent with a relational process for discovering commonalities and points of difference, rather than debate or discussion, which operate on an adversarial or expert platform. At the same time, these educators remarked that people of color have gone to great lengths, in some cases, to communicate in an open and authentic manner with them. Beyond this genuine form of two-way communication, these educators also noted that they put a lot of energy into taking action, being activist-oriented, and being accountable to people of color. Indeed, participants like Diana who were unable to be engaged in anti-racist activism were uncomfortable being called an anti-racist educator (as that label suggests confronting racism at both the individual *and* institutional levels). Thus, they described their journey as one of increasing their credibility with issues of whiteness; moreover, their journey toward anti-racism education afforded them many opportunities to engage in relationships with people of color who challenged them to be more competent and credible.

Showing respect and being respected in return is a second aspect of the trust relationship that these educators described. Where credibility underscores how one thinks of another person, the issue of respect addresses how one is perceived and treated. The question here is, "Am I respected?" and likewise, "Am I treating the other person with respect?" While notions of "respect" vary based on worldview, culture, or circumstance, a general theme in the findings from the first research question is that these white educators were supported in their journey by people of color (predominantly) and other white anti-racists. These people cared about them as people who could make a contribution (recall Anderson's opportunity to teach a class at the request of a woman of color), and their basic humanity was valued.

> All my life, I have had people of color spend tremendous amounts of time working on me to build my consciousness and my commitment, and many other people who don't really care about my consciousness or commitment who just befriended me. (Sandra)

In this brief excerpt, Sandra notes how people of color have valued her basic humanity, supported her, and in some cases nurtured her – all indicators of being respected – in order for trust to develop. As she notes, many of these people "befriended" her, connoting a trusting relationship with these people of color.

According to Levering's (1988) framework the third characteristic of trust is fairness. For us to have a trusting relationship, it is not enough that I perceive you as credible or that I believe you respect me. An underlying sense of fairness on which the relationship is based is also required. As I noted in Chapter 4, these white anti-racism educators discussed their journey from acknowledging the history and legacy of racism to examining their own whiteness in perpetuating racism. In these stories, the participants acknowledged the power dynamics that structured their relationships and their

experiences. Being an anti-racist requires paying attention to issues of equity, impartiality, and social justice, and the need to be vigilant in addressing these issues. "In some ways as a white person to be able to make a living doing this kind of work, in some ways this feels like a recycling of privilege and power" (David).

David names his concern about issues of equity and power that arise in doing anti-racist work, but for him to reach out and develop trusting relationships with others, it is incumbent on him to think through these issues: "As you can see, I'm constantly sort of thinking and worrying about all these sorts of things." Thus, fairness through attention to power dynamics is the third component of high-trust relationships. This notion of attention to justice or fairness in trust relationships with people of color was supported by each of the participants with the exception of Tim, who described how he and his wife (an African American woman) work hard at not bringing the socio-political history of racism into their relationship. Further, a sense of fairness incorporates notions of accountability, which was another theme in the interviews. In summary, the development of high trust relationships, particularly with people of color, characterized the journeys of these white anti-racism educators and is a potentially important dynamic to consider in progressive racial politics and social justice education efforts.

As discussed earlier, self-actualization was an important motivator for these white anti-racism educators. Self-actualization is on the top of Maslow's (1973) hierarchy of needs. Other needs, such as survival, safety, and belonging, are more basic human needs. Thus, while the role of trust might play a central role in developing the conditions for anti-racism education, people might not have the wherewithal to focus on developing high-trust relationships if other more basic and primary needs are not being met. It

occurred to me on more than one occasion during the interviews that most of the participants in this study were college educated and middle- or upper-middle-class. Most of them had the resources or privilege to engage in developing high-trust relationships with people of color and other anti-racist whites. For the most part, they did not develop those relationships out of necessity or survival. As a result, not including working-class or working poor anti-racist white participants is a limitation of this study. However, the focus on trust is still an important process to consider the development of an anti-racist pedagogy.

The Role of Reflection

The third reinforcing condition was the consistent opportunity to reflect on their own growth and experiences that supported their further involvement in positive social change. The anti-racism educators in this study have been or are currently involved in peer groups that challenge them to reflect on their whiteness and its impact on decisions, behaviors, attitudes, and thinking. Their abilities to think reflexively about how whiteness manifests itself in their personal lives and professional practice support continuing engagement in movements for social change and deepening levels of trust with people of color and other anti-racist whites.

In my view, other factors, such as life experiences, geographical location, and occupation, have an influence on developing an anti-racist identity. I do not want to imply that these three conditions are exclusive. Instead, the findings from this research suggest that these three overlapping and mutually reinforcing preconditions are the common threads in understanding how these white anti-racism educators made sense of their identity development. More than a description of the factors, stages, or statuses of

racial identity development, the data suggests that the development of a positive, white anti-racist identity – borne from an examination of whiteness in their lives – is anchored in a "virtuous cycle." This cycle goes from involvement in movements for social change to development of trusting relationships with people of color and other progressive whites' exploration of the implications of those relationships within the context of whiteness. This, in turn, lays the groundwork for further engagement in movements for positive social change.

Models of racial identity development and ally development suggest that many of the conditions cited above are useful in white people's racial identity development (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Tatum, 1997). Making a stronger connection between meeting one's self actualization needs (Maslow, 1973) and the development of an attractive, positive, white anti-racist identity (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998) might provide white anti-racism educators with another tool for social change. Certainly, for these educators, addressing self-actualization needs by engaging in the cycle cited above has supported their continued efforts in the creation of a white anti-racist identity.

How White Anti-Racism Educators Describe their Teaching and their Approach to their Work

In Chapter 4 I described four different theme clusters that white anti-racism educators used in talking about their practice. The first theme cluster explored the range of goals or learning outcomes of these educators – in other words, what these educators try to achieve through their anti-racism education. The second theme cluster focused on the "what" of their teaching – what the key concepts and issues are that these educators

address through their work. The third theme cluster addressed the pedagogical issue of "how" they teach – how they structure the learning process to achieve their goals. And the fourth theme cluster centered around their reflection on their teaching style. In that cluster, I laid out the issues these educators think are important in their teaching process. Here I return to the underlying question about the links between their descriptions of their work and their understanding of whiteness.

In describing their teaching and approach to their work, these educators discussed the goals that they have for their students/participants. These goals included awareness, accountability, and action. Indeed, these goals are interconnected and build upon one another. Initially, their goal is to develop a level of awareness about the history and legacy of racism, and how racism currently manifests itself. From a whiteness perspective, these educators talked about the need to cover the history of racism and its impact on peoples of color *and* on the history of whiteness and how white people's internalized dominance perpetuates racism. Awareness included a range of content issues, for example, history, identity development, white privilege, socialization, and the levels and types of racism in society. For these educators, the primacy of making these topics relevant for people of color – most of whom are usually familiar with these issues – and engaging for white people – most of whom are largely unfamiliar with these issues – is something they spend a great deal of time thinking about and planning out.

Internalized Dominance

A fundamental aspect of whiteness is the *internalized dominance* of white people, and these educators' understanding of it framed how they approached teaching white

people about racism. Indeed, based on the findings of the data one of the key features of their approach is an exploration of the internalized dominance of white people and its impact on people of color. Their understanding of whiteness (and their own internalized dominance) provided them with instructional material and expertise that was as important as the content that they covered (white identity development, white privilege, socialization, modern racism behaviors). From their own experience they are able to draw examples and make connections between models or theories and the practical application of them in race relations. Whether an examination of internalized dominance is a distinguishing feature (compared to other anti-racism educators) is beyond the scope of this study; however, this focus on social justice supports other research that indicates that addressing whiteness requires a critical anti-racism approach (George, 2004).

The focus on internalized dominance as the mirror to internalized oppression has been discussed in the psycho-social literature and is an important aspect of how white people support whiteness (Hitchcock, 2002). Hitchcock notes that internalized dominance is imposed by an outside structure, internalized by white people, culturally supported, and is painful to hold in one's consciousness (p. 144). While these white anti-racism educators emphasized the examination of internalized dominance as one key to understanding whiteness, it is important to note that an over-emphasis of the psychological aspects of whiteness can disrupt the focus on the material conditions that reinforce whiteness at the systemic level. For example, Jane's perspective that it is essential to raise the organizational, institutional, and societal manifestations of whiteness in order to have a more complete understanding of how whiteness operates suggests that

simply focusing on internalized dominance leaves part of the whiteness equation unaddressed.

A Focus on the Concrete

A second link between how these white anti-racism educators described their work and how they framed whiteness was the emphasis on making whiteness "concrete." By concrete, I mean the very physical manifestations of whiteness, such as "white privilege," and they tended to teach people in straight-forward, performance-oriented ways, such as through presentations, experiential learning activities, cross-cultural interactions, dialogue, and investigative research. These methods were their preferred ways for teaching the content. Videos, case studies, and stories dominated the range of activities these educators utilized.

Incorporating whiteness into anti-racism education is both valuable and difficult. Nelson Rodriguez (1998) notes:

> To talk about what would constitute a pedagogy of whiteness is difficult, however, for the direction such a pedagogy might take can and should be multiple. That is, just as whiteness itself changes over space and time, a pedagogy of whiteness also will change depending on the specific circumstances one finds oneself in and the pedagogical focus one wishes to explore and emphasize. (p. 33)

Creating a more nuanced and textured understanding of how whiteness shapes and reinforces racism can support students in taking action within the spheres in which they have influence. At the same time, a simplified process for teaching and learning about whiteness – one that over-relies on videos and case studies – can risk limiting the breadth and depth of how whiteness shifts and evolves over time and space.

The Work is Intensely Personal

One other issue these findings highlight is that white anti-racism educators believe that this work is intensely personal. For these educators, engaging in anti-racism education is not simply an intellectual exercise, hobby, or pastime. Instead, white people who are aware of the implications of their whiteness and are actively engaged in anti-racism education share some similar traits. These traits include having strong relationships with people of color where racism is addressed, and they also try to stay in touch with their essential humanity (remaining humble and open). The issue of relationships with people of color and white people is detailed above. Here I turn to the second way in which this work is intensely personal for them: an important reminder of their "humanness."

The other trait they shared was their diligence in staying in touch with their humanity. All of them expressed a belief that having a sense of humility is important in being effective in this work; all of them expressed an awareness and understanding of the connections between their own and others' characteristics as a humans. Six of the participants disclosed that they needed to work though some difficult challenges in their lives and that the experiences left them with a deeper sense of appreciation for the impact of violence and oppression in the world. For these participants, keeping one's "ego in check" allowed them to be less defensive when they receive critical feedback about how their behavior unintentionally contributed to a potentially oppressive situation. Many noted that receiving feedback that challenged their self-perceptions as a consistently caring, thoughtful, just person comes with being engaged in anti-racism work.

One my colleagues of color who read the study wondered whether any kind of anti-racism education that does not fundamentally redistribute power and resources to oppressed people is not a more nuanced or sophisticated form of racism. While white anti-racism educators may have deep relationships with people of color and be attentive to the dynamics of cross-race relationships, a focus on "raising awareness" does little to change the overall situation of people of color. My colleague noted, "We have had awareness and encounter groups for whites for decades now, and one can argue that the situation for the largest proportion of people of color is more dire now then in 1965." The concern that my colleague raises highlights two important issues. First, a pedagogy of whiteness as Giroux (1998), Rodriguez (1998), and Doane (2003) suggest ought to support a change in the material conditions that structure the lives of people of color (and white people). A more explicit action-oriented approach to learning about racism through engaging in anti-racist struggle may support these anti-racism educators' goals in a more direct and substantive way. At the same time, a change in the material conditions of people of color requires more than anti-racism education. Systemic and institutional structures need to change, and the fact that most have not changed indicates that other forces continue to reinforce the status quo (Bowser & Hunt, 1996; Hacker, 1992; Kozol, 2005).

I will return briefly to this point in the concluding chapter; however, for discussion purposes here, the challenge of anti-racism education is to create a level of awareness that supports the taking of action at the individual and systemic levels. Short of taking action, raising awareness leaves systemic whiteness in place. This perspective is consistent with the other researchers and theorists of radical multiculturalism, critical

multiculturalism, critical whiteness studies, or social justice education (George, 2004; Giroux, 1998; Hitchcock, 2002; McLaren, 1998).

How White Anti-racism Educators Describe the Meaning of Whiteness

In Chapter 4 I presented four common themes of how these white anti-racism educators described the meaning of whiteness. These themes included whiteness as power, privilege, culture, and ideology. Further, I elaborated on how these ways of describing the meaning of whiteness comes from their personal experience and exposure to writing and thinking in academic contexts, community work, and organizational consulting. Their responses go to the heart of the principle research question, "*From the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice?*" The themes identified in chapter four highlights both *what* they believed whiteness consists of as well as *how* they came to that understanding. Beyond the four primary ways in which whiteness is defined, several important points came up during the interviews. First, these educators worked explicitly with notions and constructs from critical white studies because they were encouraged by people of color to explore their own whiteness and its relationship to racism. Second, they saw that whiteness helps to address part of what is missing from or is ineffective about anti-racism education. And finally, they regard white people's lack of understanding about whiteness as a competence issue. At the end of this section I explore two important questions that my critical friends of color raised during their review of the data from Chapter 4, and they are: "For whose purposes is whiteness interrogated?" and "Does the study of whiteness

simply co-opt the intellectual work of people of color who have been examining these issues for some time?"

Teaching "Whiteness" Explicitly

Anderson and Shelly noted that they were slightly uncomfortable with the topic of "whiteness." Anderson believed that part of his discomfort comes from his concern that the notion of whiteness comes from an academic context and is therefore somewhat inaccessible. As a result, he has rejected exploring this material in any comprehensive fashion. Shelly, on the other hand, teaches college-level classes (as did Anderson) and is somewhat aware of the field of whiteness studies. Her discomfort comes from the same place as Anderson – not having become "expert enough" on the subject. Yet, their inclusion in this study was based on being referred by others who saw them as quite knowledgeable on the topic. Confusion about the boundaries of whiteness – What is it? Where does it begin? Where does it end? How do we read it? – is a dilemma with which scholars in whiteness studies continue to grapple (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998). Anderson's lament that the material is somewhat "inaccessible" and probably class-based underscores this dilemma: How can the research and theory behind whiteness studies be translated for practical dissemination and application to an audience outside of academia? At the same time, how can we be clear about the meaning and importance of whiteness, explicate the variations and nuances of how it is understood and continues to evolve, and resist the easy commodification of whiteness into nothing more than performance for diversity trainers? While such questions are beyond the scope of this dissertation, they support the on-going dialogue about making whiteness both meaningful *and* applicable.

Shelly and Anderson had important insights into the meaning of whiteness and how it has influenced their teaching. Anderson spoke of how internalized dominance affects relationships with people of color, and Shelly spoke to the notion of "meritocracy" as a way in which whiteness is reinforced in systems and structures. This suggests that their tacit understanding of whiteness comes not from the literature per se, but rather borne of their experience and is supported by those around them.

While Anderson expressed some ambivalence about discussing "whiteness," other participants expressed more comfort with discussing both the relevant academic material as well as how they understood whiteness from their own experience. Diana, for example, has been teaching a course specifically about whiteness for several semesters while Jane uses the concept explicitly in her consulting work, and Tim recently wrote a book about whiteness based on the organizing he has done and the group he helped to found. Like Tim, Liz and Heloise have both contributed to the literature on whiteness, offering critical and insightful analyses of whiteness in education and other institutions. Their contributions have expanded the scope of how whiteness is manifested and understood by white people (in particular). Thus, all of these participants have worked with concepts and notions of whiteness that stem from critical white studies as well as their own experience in doing anti-racism work. In these instances, whiteness moved out of one dimensional views of simply "white privilege" or "white culture" and into a more nuanced view of whiteness as history, power, social context, and positionality (Frankenberg, 1993).

Important to their teaching of whiteness, these educators each discussed the role of being accountable to people of color, and how they were expected to work with other

white people to examine and interrupt racism. For some anti-racism educators, like Jane, people of color have been mentors or close colleagues. And for others, like Heloise, intimate relationships and friendships have served as a basis for this kind of support. White colleagues, friends, and family members were on the periphery in terms of the support these white anti-racism educators received in examining whiteness. Thus, most of their support to engage and be accountable for teaching "whiteness" in this work comes from people of color. I return to this idea below as it has relevance for how anti-racism education by white educators is supported and encouraged.

Addressing What is Ineffective in Anti-racism Education

A review of the data from Chapter 4 suggests that one of the values of examining whiteness by (white) anti-racism educators is that it addresses what is lost, missing or ineffective about anti-racism education. The research studies of Amey-Taylor (1997), Jordan (1998), O'Brien (1999) and N. Smith (2001) all highlight models and practices of anti-racism and of anti-racism educators. White privilege is a consistent topic in the anti-racism educational programs these researchers discuss. White identity (and identity development) is another topic that is incorporated into their discussion of effective training programs. The focus, however, for anti-racism education is on the effects of racism (at the systems, cultural, and individual levels) on people of color. Less attention is directed to how the internalized dominance of white people has shaped the history of race relations throughout history and continues to *race* white people's lives (albeit in a very unnamed and unacknowledged way). Certainly, anti-racism education examines power dynamics and the ability of white people to enforce their stereotypes and

prejudices; however, a more comprehensive analysis of the various white racial projects, as I outlined in Chapter 2, tends to be beyond the scope of much anti-racism education in the programs I discussed with this study's participants. Tim noted during his interview:

> Here I am, surrounded and tacked into diversity practitioners and sociologists and I'm telling them no one's talking about being white, and they're saying, "You're crazy, people talk about that all the time." I was like, they don't talk about it in a certain way, and I had to explain this, and eventually I began to get a handle on it and people began to understand and at that time, I decided there was a need for education because sociologists are saying there's no such thing; diversity practitioners are saying there's no such thing, there's no need, but then we have these other people who have really written very key kinds of analyses about how we need to know this and how it fits in with these frameworks, but there's a real disconnect.

The exploration of whiteness, then, is a missing element in many current anti-racist education programs.

As one aspect of a thorough anti-racism education program, the exploration of whiteness provides one important foundation on which to interrogate and intervene in racism. As the California Institute of Integral Studies (2002) has suggested, "transforming consciousness in people who have long taken-for-granted that their own culture, values, and standards are superior and/or universally applicable, or that a universal culture is possible and desirable, is a daunting educational challenge." The inclusion of research and theory from critical whiteness studies provides additional context and information to white anti-racism educators; for example, reading Haney-Lopez' (1996) White by law: The Legal Construction of Race offers anti-racism educators a sharp analysis of how the definition of who is white (and who is not) has evolved over time in service of white power and privilege. Jackie offers another example of this when she mentions the use of an article on whiteness to help illuminate the ways in which internalized dominance and white normativity/invisibility operates.

> [My class has used the article by] Barbara J. Flagg on Whiteness and the Transparency Phenomena, and [its analysis of] race neutral decision making and is there any such thing as race neutral decision making, even though we say this is color blind, it is race neutral, but how can it be race neutral if it's … how do you get to race neutrality and that's a farce, and the mythology of whiteness as being invisible. So, it's really about making what is true and real visible and then naming what it is. (Jackie)

The inclusion of whiteness in anti-racism education can more effectively support the consciousness raising, learning, and transformation of participants. While assessing the effectiveness of anti-racism education by the inclusion of material on whiteness is beyond the scope of this research project, the inclusion of such material by these white anti-racism educators suggests that they believe it adds value to their practice.

> I think after we read that [article on whiteness] and talk about that and maybe some other things, we may take a turn in a different way. Who knows? So, I think this is an evolving category. White studies, whiteness studies…I read a manuscript the other day for a journal that was about whiteness, and I thought, "Oh, this is a different way to look at this." (Diana)

Providing fresh insight and new ways of thinking about old problems may support the engagement of white participants in a way that helps them to move beyond "feeling guilty" to examining their internalized dominance, agency in changing behaviors, and taking responsibility for their role in racism. A pedagogical process that challenges white people to confront whiteness in new ways, as these white anti-racism educators observe, may be one step in changing underlying power dynamics.

Understanding "Whiteness" as a Competence Issue

The third issue for consideration here is that these white educators regard white people's lack of understanding about whiteness as a competence issue. The inability of white people to understand their own whiteness inhibits the effectiveness of their social

interactions with people of color. People of color have long noted that white people operate within a "bubble," unaware of the impact of their behaviors on those around them (Bell, 1992; Flagg, 1997; M. Hill, 1997). These unconscious actions and behaviors also tend to have an impact on the white people themselves, although these effects tend to be unaddressed in a lot of anti-racism education.

> You know, they say it's all about economics. That's not true because I've seen organizations willing to lose money and lose market because of their racism. Or I've seen clients, you know, one of my clients unfortunately is paying like $7.8 billion over 10 years because of being stupid, because they made three advertising mistakes, and they were unwilling to deal with the source and change the way that they were doing. My thing is, "Hey, it's costing you billions of dollars. And their unwillingness to say, 'We can fix this.'" They are now fixing it, but it had to be a crisis. I foresee a lot more class action suits because of organizations' arrogance and unwillingness to change, and I see a lot of organizations going out of business. My thing is, "Hey, you had a choice. You could have done what was competitive," so that's what I'm surprised about sometimes, is the arrogance, the short-sightedness, and how entrenched and unwilling to change many systems are. I don't think it's about giving up power, I think it's about incompetence. (Jane)

Jane acknowledges that when it comes to a lack of understanding of whiteness, "being stupid" can cost white people a lot of time, energy, and other resources. I raise the notion of "competence" within this larger discussion of how these white anti-racism educators define whiteness because it is essential to understand what is required in order to be "competent." A good place to begin developing a level of competence and sophistication of these issues is to understand *what* is whiteness.

One simple framework for developing competence with whiteness is for anti-racism educators to support participants in moving from "unconscious incompetence" to "unconscious competence." In this development process, anti-racism educators can provide theoretical models, exercises, discussion, and reflection points along a continuum that moves along the following sequence:

"unconscious incompetence" → "conscious incompetence" → "conscious competence" → "unconscious competence"

In order to move along this continuum, an anti-racism educator might begin by exploring what is whiteness, where it came from, how it manifests itself, and how it connects with racism; then after mastering those basic issues, one might explore some of the deeper questions raised in critical white studies with a special focus on how individual histories and identities are developed or shaped by whiteness with some emphasis on the development of an anti-racist identity. As one becomes more facile in how to engage in these issues and work with other white people and people of color, much of this knowledge becomes tacit. An example Brad offered during this interview was one in which he works to challenge white people to conscious incompetence by having to define white culture:

> Part of the work that I love doing with Judith Katz around what white people can do about racism is that we spend time defining what white culture is. And white people may start out saying there's a lot of confusion, and a lot of "we can't do that," but it gets very clear very fast that we do have a lot of information about what whiteness is and what aspects of it we like and what aspects we don't like.

Brad and other participants in this study noted that one of the tasks of anti-racism education is to support white people in identifying and defining these various aspects of whiteness and that this is one step toward an anti-racist identity.

The data from this study support the idea that a thorough understanding of whiteness helps in addressing this "incompetence" in understanding and taking action against racism. If one of the goals of anti-racism educators is to take action against racism, then an element of effective anti-racist pedagogy is examination of whiteness with an eye toward helping white people (in particular) become facile with the material,

the implications of whiteness in one's own life, and how to develop healthy and supportive multicultural relationships. Beyond this, the ability to understand whiteness from a power, culture, privilege, and ideological perspective can equip white people with new ways of thinking about racism and new strategies for taking action against racism.

Who Benefits?

Having just taken the point of view that by examining whiteness, white people can become more competent in taking action against racism, it is important to acknowledge that my critical friends of color who read various parts of this study asked me about who I believe benefits from interrogating whiteness. From their perspective, interrogating whiteness benefits white academics that get to write about it (like myself), white anti-racism practitioners who get to earn a living from talking about it, and for white people who may not ever come to understand the reality and devastating impact of racism on communities of color (by focusing on the upside of the racism equation). Such a focus on whiteness, unmonitored and unaccountable, can serve to support white liberalism but without benefit for communities of color. At its most horrifying, the focus on whiteness can serve to re-center white people in the conversation, take the attention from the important work being done by people of color, or be used by white supremacists to appropriate language and action strategies. Parker Johnson (1999) states: "I hope that we will not reinscribe white hegemony by merely interrogating its subjectivity and particularism, but that we will create new intellectual space for relational understanding and, more importantly, racial justice" (p. 5). These are legitimate concerns; for example, most of the available and commercialized literature on whiteness is from white people.

Indeed, another question that my critical friends of color raised was whether the study of whiteness doesn't simply co-opt the work of people of color. Doane (2003) notes:

> To some degree, [whiteness studies] constitutes the "repackaging" of earlier insights about the nature of whiteness. For example, W.E.B. Du Bois was speaking about "white privilege" when he described the "public and psychological wage" enjoyed by even the poorest whites.... The relative lack of recognition received by this work highlights the marginalization of the contributions of African-Americans to the study of race relations. (p. 4-5)

So the specter of these misuses and abuses are real and the development of anti-racism education that includes attention to issues of whiteness needs to be attended to in a carefully thought-out way.

Given the potential value that can come from framing the conversation for white people around questions of whiteness, the important question is not whether to include whiteness but how to include it. If the issue of addressing whiteness is posed not as an "either/or" issue but as a "both/and" concern, then a sensitive and accurate presentation of whiteness in anti-racism education draws upon the literature and deep thinking of people of color and continues to loop back to how one's evolving understanding supports racial justice. Whiteness can potentially be recast within a larger multicultural framework in order to create more space for other points of view. Several participants noted this as an important consideration in their anti-racism education. Jackie, for example, co-teaches a class on whiteness. The class focuses on the role of white people in racism, but it is not an exclusive focus. She indicated that there is a need also to name and acknowledge the impact of whiteness on people of color. Moreover, they use various texts from people of color who have written on the notion of whiteness. As another example, Jane notes that the task of understanding whiteness is not to "interrupt it" but to create opportunity to include new ways of being in the world:

> I mean you can't interrupt your culture, you can be aware of it, you can understand it's a cultural system [but] is not the only cultural system, but I don't have a goal. I want people to own that they are white, not move away from it. I want to say, you know, I have this time thing, I think a meeting starts on time when the clock hits 11 o'clock. That to me is on time. I understand other people have different notions that I'm going to have to understand and negotiate a way that my on time and your on time works for us. So, I don't think it's about interrupting it, I think it's about recognition. I think it's about being able to talk about it. I think it's about changing organizational structure so that their bandwidth is much wider, and that you're not deciding professional means a white way of approaching things, or communicating, or any of those things.

On the other hand, understanding whiteness can also be recast as the precondition for the essential task of "abolishing it" (from a race-traitor based philosophy).

> I think that I understood race privilege in a variety of different ways very early in my life, and I followed a particular path based on that understanding that was pretty much developmental until I was introduced to the race-traitor philosophy, and I really rejected that at first because I thought that it was white people trying to disavow themselves of the impact of whiteness. That's how I analyzed it at first. But I also think that it was because I was really invested in my ability to be a part of a multi-cultural conversation because of the role that I played as the white person challenging racism, and that if I started to examine that as a form of re-centering whiteness and white fetishism, that it was very destabilizing for me. So I kind of went through this, I really did go through like a breakdown and a transformation around that because I really had to re-examine how invested I was in being white, how important my white identity was to the work that I did. (Sandra)

In either case, examining whiteness increases the opportunities for new possibilities to arise for anti-racism education and for racial justice. In the final analysis, including whiteness in anti-racism education is only valuable if it is in service of advancing the cause of racial justice. If that is the case, then the point of interrogating whiteness is to either "abolish the white race" or "expanding the bandwidth of multiculturalism" so that we move toward a more racially just society. Further, interrogations of whiteness within anti-racism education need to draw upon the insights and voices of people of color, and not just the available critical white studies literature developed by white people.

Feelings and Thoughts about Teaching Whiteness and their Influence

This fourth research question addresses the second part of the primary research question: from the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice? The focus of this fourth research question addresses the ways in which a greater understanding of whiteness has informed the practice of these white anti-racism educators. In Chapter 4, I identified several themes that emerged from the data regarding how these educators think about the impact of whiteness in their own practices: living with uncertainty and remaining hopeful, managing anxiety with competence and humility, and remembering to teach with compassion and understanding. These themes follow the thinking of Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998),who believe that it begins with a simple question: what does it mean to be white? They suggest that the answer must "allow for a critique and a rejection of the oppression inflicted in the name of whiteness but concurrently creates a space for a progressive white identity that transcends some narrow notion of a politically correct orthodoxy (p. 21)." They note further that a key feature of a "whiteness" pedagogy involves the development of both theoretical and emotional support systems to help courageous white people through this complex transition.

> [Such] theoretical and emotional support systems must not be ascetic and punitive, but appealing, affirmative, humourous sensitive, and aesthetically dynamic. They must draw on the emancipatory productions of many cultures while making use of the most progressive aspects of white culture itself (p. 21).

From their perspective, white anti-racism educators must help white people construct a progressive, anti-racist white identity as an alternative to the white ethnic pride shaped by the right wing. Currently, liberal and pluralistic forms of multiculturalism and identity politics have not produced a compelling vision of a reconstructed white identity. A

critical identity that renounces whiteness, feels guilty or blamed, or develops a codependent relationship with people of color is ineffective. Instead, Kincheloe and Steinberg argue for creating a positive, proud, attractive, anti-racist white identity that is empowered to travel in and out of various racial/ethnic circles with confidence and empathy.

> Central to a critical pedagogy of whiteness is the development of a healthy, hopeful, justice-oriented response to this paradox [of developing an understanding of white lies along with the pain and confusion that result] coupled with a rethinking of both white identity and the very nature of whiteness itself (p. 20).

Social justice educators have taken up the cause of teaching anti-racism and have proposed several important models for anti-racism education. Marchesani & Adams (1992) examine four dimensions "of teaching and learning that appear to have particular relevance to issues of social and cultural diversity" (p. 10). They include knowing students, knowing oneself as an instructor, incorporating a transformational curriculum, and "develop a flexible repertoire of teaching strategies" (p. 16). More recently, Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997) provide a sourcebook that outlines a variety of theoretical and conceptual foundations, pedagogical frameworks, and designs for social justice education.

Based on the themes from Chapter 4 as well as the ideas put forth by Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) and building on several of the concepts from Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997), I turn now to offering a series of process guidelines for teaching whiteness based on the experience of these white anti-racism educators. These guidelines for helping white people develop a positive, proud, attractive anti-racist white identity include: (1) be clear about intent and stay grounded; (2) be hopeful and take the long term view; (3) be open to continuous learning; (4) be a helpful role model through self-

disclosure; (5) be prepared by doing your homework; (6) be compassionate and generous toward participants; and (7) be in the here and now. Underlying these seven guidelines is an eighth guideline that is to develop a support network to support following the first seven guidelines. From my perspective, each of these eight guidelines extend beyond traditional notions of useful teaching practice. Each guideline, when viewed through the prism of whiteness, has a particular character and focus. The remainder of this chapter describes each of these guidelines in more detail.

Be Clear about Intent and Stay Grounded

These white anti-racism educators developed a series of "rules of engagement" or "rules of the road" for teaching about whiteness based on their practice and on learning about whiteness in their own lives. The first of these rules is to be clear about one's intent as an educator and stay grounded. While the intent varied to some degree among the white anti-racism educators, each of them identified working for racial justice through supporting white people to examine their own whiteness as one component of that intent. For each, the intent was clear; how they articulated their intent was based on their own histories and understandings of whiteness. They also identified the need to "stay grounded" in doing this work because there are many points of view about what whiteness is or is not, how important it is in anti-racism justice, and how to teach it. These anti-racism educators believed it is important to listen to one's "internal voice" or to help answer these questions. Issues of race are so highly charged in the United States that being clear about intent and not getting caught up in the emotional charge of race can be quite challenging. White anti-racism educators interacting with white participants (and

people of color, too) can "re-stimulate" or "trigger" intense emotional feelings on the part of the educator. Centering on the responsibility and culpability of white people in this process can be tricky waters to navigate; therefore, taking a thoughtful, well considered perspective on the nature of whiteness, one's role in it, and potential triggers can support the anti-racism educator in moving through group or interpersonal dynamics.

Be Hopeful and Take the Long Term View

The second guideline that emerged from the collective experience of these educators is to remain hopeful and take the long-term view of this work for racial justice. While this may be true generally of anti-racism work or anti-oppression work, these white anti-racism educators indicated that in dealing with the whiteness side of the anti-racism equation, the complexity increases exponentially. For each of these educators, holding out hope is an important aspect of developing a strong, positive, racial identity. It can become somewhat disillusioning when confronting the enormity of the task. Yet changes in white attitudes, behaviors, and power structures or organizations are possible. Each of these educators discussed personal "wins" in engaging in anti-racism education, and they also discussed that their enhanced understanding of whiteness supported them in their ability to effect change in participants or students. The other aspect of this guideline is that resistance to change increases when it is unclear what one is moving toward. Having a vision of a racially just future is a hopeful sign, and this sense of hope is important for the educator as well as the participants.

Since issues of racism are so entrenched in the United States and the connections and deep-rootedness of these issues are so complete, addressing racism can seem slow-

going at best. For example, there has been a sea-change in gender equality over the past four decades. While there are a multitude of reasons for these changes, a discussion of which is beyond the scope of this dissertation, an important point to be made here is that women are a part of most family structures and most men have on-going personal relationships with women. The same can be said of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people where statistically, one in four families has an out gay, lesbian, or bisexual family member. This is by no means to say that sexism and heterosexism (among other forms of oppression) are not alive and well – they are. However, the lines between white people and people of color are clearer now then the 1960s. Many whites can live their entire lives and see few people of color in their neighborhoods, places of worship, and in power positions in government/business. This dynamic is changing somewhat in the southwest/west with the rise of the Latino population – but this is still far from anything approaching equity. With such deep-rootedness, it is difficult to keep change in perspective, but change has and continues to occur. Year by year and decade to decade, change does not appear to move fast, but in the long arc of time, positive change has occurred and is occurring. It is important for educators to take the long-term view of anti-racism work.

Be Open to Continuous Learning

The third way in which whiteness has influenced their teaching and offers a useful guideline for white anti-racism educators is to be open to continuous learning. For these educators, one of the most important aspects of doing anti-racism education is the ability to learn and develop as a person. Indeed, for many of them, their own development is a

primary driver for their continued involvement in such work. Such continuous learning is connected to learning more about racism, whiteness, racial justice, the process of teaching such issues, as well as how whiteness has impacted their own personal histories. Their curiosity about discovering aspects of their lives and the world around them that were invisible because of whiteness encourages a drive for continuous learning.

For anti-racism educators, continuous learning happens within a number of important contexts. Our understanding of racism, whiteness, and anti-racism education continues to expand and change. Moreover, white anti-racism educators are also continuously learning about themselves – seeking feedback, hearing feedback, reflecting and incorporating modified or new behaviors into how white people interact with one another and with people of color. Further, other societal shifts influence our relationships with one another and how white anti-racism educators think and work with whiteness. As examples, generational differences, the impact of technology, and the global economy and travel all have an impact on race relations. Today's "gen x'ers" possess different notions of diversity and race than the "baby boom" generation does. Pop culture has heavily influenced race relations, fashion and style, music, and art. At the same time, the impact of technology gives today's younger people greater access to people and opinions from around the world and more people are traveling to diverse international destinations. All of these factors add up to a view of whiteness that is evolving to become more textured and nuanced. Addressing whiteness within this context requires an openness to continuous learning as an educator.

Be a Helpful Role Model through Self-disclosure

Connected to the notion of being open to continuous learning is the fourth guideline about being open and self-disclosing one's own journey as a white person working for racial justice. The value of self-disclosure about their own journey includes: 1) naming previously unnamed thoughts and experience encourages reflection and new learning, 2) affirming the human journey that these educators and their participants are on, and 3) offering important role modeling to participants and supports the development of safety in the classroom or training room for self-disclosure. An important aspect of this self-disclosure is that the educators in this study disclosed information about their own journeys when it was in service of the broader learning goal in the classroom. Self-disclosure was purposeful and not simply ego-driven.

The nature of anti-racism education requires educators to move beyond knowledge transfer. Anti-racism educators ask participants to engage in a form of critical self-reflection to consider the gaps between what most participants espouse as egalitarian values that they hold and their daily behaviors. Anti-racism educators can provide hope and inspiration regarding the potential for change, compassion for the challenges and successes along the journey, and highlight more effective interpersonal behaviors. Moreover, the development of a high-trust relationship requires a level of authenticity and self-disclosure. Such role modeling enables participants to feel that their journey is normal, that they can be honest with themselves and others, and they can try on new ways of relating to others.

Be Prepared by Doing Your Homework

Each of these educators identified "whiteness" as a constantly evolving topic and that they were always learning more about the nuances of what it is and how it operates. As a result, many of these educators indicated that they had become more intentional about preparing and doing "one's homework" when conducting a class or training, doing research or engaging in an organizational intervention. Beyond continuous learning, these educators noted the importance of thinking through the audience make-up, the timing of the event, organizational context, segments and transitions, possible hooks and responses. Moreover, several of these educators mentioned that they will not begin a teaching or training session without requiring participants to complete preparatory reading or homework. Further, several also mentioned that their strong preference is for a series of events rather than a one-time event. The goal of preparation is to focus on discussion and dialogue or engage with the readings rather than hearing about the information for the first time in the session. Following these educators' preferences for process-based interaction over didactic teaching methods, learning about whiteness becomes a more process and reflection-based project rather than content-driven. Given the way in which contemporary race relations continues to evolve, as well as our understanding of how to intervene in the dynamics of whiteness, it is incumbent upon white anti-racism educators to be prepared by knowing the audience, the learning outcomes of the work, and to anticipate and think through likely challenges and barriers to learning. While preparation is an important hallmark of any effective educator, it requires anti-racism educators to examine both the content and process of a content area that is both highly theoretical and systemic as well as intensely personal and pragmatic.

Be Compassionate and Generous toward Participants

The sixth guideline identified through the data in Chapter 4 was that having compassion and a generosity of spirit is valuable in supporting the learning environment. Most of the white anti-racism educators in this study have learned about their own whiteness through the love, generosity, and compassion of others (particularly people of color). Other people have taken the time, and even when it was personally painful or inexpedient, went above and beyond to support the learning process for these white educators. Furthermore, many participants have learned through their own anti-racism teaching practice that the more compassionate and generous they are, the more participants are willing to engage in the learning process. Several participants indicated that they help to establish this openness through identifying with the fears, concerns of the participants, and by assuming good intentions on the part of the participants. This approach supports a positive human connection, appropriate challenge and support of participants, and a "go with the flow" dynamic that minimize resistance. Surprisingly, many of the white anti-racism educators mentioned that they have come to love working with the people they encounter that are willing to understand the dynamics of racism and whiteness. "Love" is a fairly strong term; however, this notion of strong, positive regard for other people is essential in order to see their humanity – and this consequently supports people's transformation.

As participants explore their beliefs and long-held assumptions regarding race and racism, it is often the case that behaviors and comments in the classroom can reinforce oppressive dynamics. Few other learning contexts require educators to so quickly discern

their own triggering events, and either move those to the side or use them in the moment to enhance the learning process of participants. Adeptly and effectively confronting participants (or the group) while staying compassionate and showing a sincere interest in their personal growth can be challenging for anti-racism educators. And if the learning process is to continue, white anti-racism educators need to be both compassionate and generous as participants struggle through their challenges and successes.

Be in the Here and Now

The seventh guideline that stems from the data reviewed in Chapter 4 is the value of being in the "here and now" rather than the "there and then." The notion of this guideline is not related to learning about history; instead, the intent of this guideline supports educators' managing the resistance that often comes from this work. Being in the "here and now" allows educators to accept what is rather than what "should" or "ought" to be. It is connected to Sandra's idea of giving "grace" as well as Anderson's approach of noticing his client's resistance but not pushing too much. As these white anti-racism educators have come to understand how the task of "abolishing" or "interrupting" whiteness impacts their teaching of it, they shared that they have increased their capacity for acceptance of what is and attending to the present moment and what is unfolding in the group. Perhaps the focus on what is unfolding in the group is the clearest demonstration of "being in the here and now." Valuable "ah ha" moments are created as white people explore what whiteness is and how it supports racial injustice. Instead of focusing on getting through an exercise, careful attention to the here and now supports the identification and illumination of what participants are learning about themselves and

each other. Compared to other disciplines, and even many of the applied sciences, much of anti-racism education is focused on engaging participants in the here and now – helping them to explore both interpersonally and intrapersonally the dynamics of whiteness as it exists in the present moment. White anti-racism education requires educators to be present with participants – actively listening to what is being shared, as well as what is not being shared, and how people are responding to what is being shared.

Develop a Support Network

The eighth guideline for white anti-racism educators engaged in teaching or incorporating whiteness in their practice is the development of a supportive network. All of the white anti-racism educators from this study indicated that they have received tremendous support, particularly from people of color, in learning more about whiteness and how it manifests in their lives. The development of a network supports a continuous learning process since the landscape of whiteness shifts and evolves over time. Second, a network can challenge and confront white anti-racism educators as we invariably bump into our own "blind spots." Not only have these educators continued to learn about whiteness but they have also continued to learn how they support or interrupt racism through their thoughts and behaviors. Third, a network can support the frustration and disappointment that can accrue from working with people who resist critical examination of whiteness and its role in perpetuating racism. The task of guiding white participants in an exploration of their own whiteness can be a difficult and challenging project. Having a support network can enhance an educator's efforts in teaching anti-racism and help with the focus on and commitment to the task. Having a support network enabled these white

anti-racism educators to have the opportunity to be grounded, take the long-term perspective, and be open to continuous learning. The development of a network supported their ability to learn more about whiteness and how it informs their practice.

Summary

In this chapter I discussed the findings of my research. Since this study's research question – *from the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice* – is comprised of the four sub-research questions, I discussed several important elements related to each question. Regarding the first research question, I discussed three issues that are relevant in understanding their journeys and approaches toward anti-racism education. These included an exploration of an interesting paradox that exists for each of these white anti-racism educators in that people of color played a significant role in their racial consciousness although all of them believe that they (and other white anti-racists) have a role to play in the racial consciousness of other whites. Second, the "hook" for most of these white people to become committed to anti-racism is the opportunity for self-actualization and there are some important implications of this finding in terms of social justice pedagogy. Lastly, I noted that trust plays a key role in their journey toward being an anti-racism educator and it has influenced how they view their work.

For the second research question regarding how these educators describe their teaching, I discussed the notion of internalized dominance and its influence on their approach. Further, I noted that these educators consistently reported having strong relationships with people of color, and I discussed the potential implications of this. And

finally, I offered that these educators discussed the importance of staying in touch with their humanity (and other's humanity) as a way of engaging in this work.

For the third research question regarding how white anti-racism educators describe the meaning of whiteness, I discussed three aspects of the data. First, I discussed the idea that these educators work explicitly with notions and constructs from critical white studies because they were supported to explore their own whiteness and its relationship to racism. Second, I noted that they have come to see that whiteness helps to address part of what is lost, missing, or ineffective about anti-racism education. And finally, I discussed how they regard white people's lack of understanding about whiteness as a competence issue.

Related to the fourth question, I discussed a series of process guidelines based on the data from Chapter 4. These guidelines are: (1) be clear about intent and stay grounded; (2) be hopeful and take the long term view; (3) be open to continuous learning; (4) be a helpful role model through self-disclosure; (5) be prepared by doing your homework; (6) be compassionate and generous toward participants; (7) be in the here and now; and (8) is develop a support network to do all the rest.

In the final chapter, I offer several overall conclusions and how they might impact anti-racism education and offer recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Implications for Theory and Practice

Based on the findings in Chapter 4 and the discussion of those findings in Chapter 5, I turn to answering the principle research question, *"From the perspective of a white anti-racism educator, what is whiteness and how does it inform my practice,"* for myself. I have had a valuable opportunity presented to me to interview a dozen white anti-racism educators, and to engage in several invaluable conversations with people of color and other whites about this research project. From this vantage point, I have come to a more refined and nuanced sense, perhaps, of what constitutes whiteness from a white anti-racism educator's perspective. The essential elements of this understanding include:

A social history of how white people developed, maintained, and supported institutional racism for their own benefit, and

Created rationalizations by white people – both historically and in the present – to support the continued oppression of people of color while at the same time privileging white norms, values, thinking, and cultural artifacts, and

The unconscious commitment to a paradigm of internalized racial dominance.

An important aspect of this emergent understanding is how whiteness *supports* racism. Unlike David in this study, I take the position that whiteness is different from racism. They are not synonyms. Like most of the participants, I believe racism includes a much broader set of concepts and ideas. But much of what has been written regarding racism

has been focused on people of color (and I would add African Americans in particular). I do not disagree with the focus on people of color; however, examining whiteness provides a more thorough understanding of the role and responsibility of white people.

Many anti-racism educators wonder why there is so much exploration of "whiteness" since, they would argue, there has been attention to the role of white people in maintaining racism for decades. Further, many of the analyses of whiteness run very close to previous analyses by people of color (Doane, 2003). To be fair, the central question of whiteness – what does it mean to be white? – is not new. Scholars and researchers have been asking this question for some time. The difference now, based on this study, is there seems to be a greater sense of urgency to re-engage white people in the conversation about how their histories, values and culture continue to reinforce racism (Doane, 2003).

One of the important lessons that I learned through this study is that whiteness contributes to anti-racism education's practice by providing a more detailed account of the history of white racism, and how white people have defined the rules for success in the United States – before the Constitution. Whether it is Bacon's Rebellion, or the fabled Emancipation Proclamation, or current immigration policy, white people succeed by defining success, and a clear accounting of this history within the larger context of racism and racial justice provides an important analysis of how institutions and communities self-organize to protect white people's assets and identities.

In order to gain, protect, or not lose assets as well as protect white identities, white people have created a variety of rationalizations over time. Shelly's identification of the "myth of meritocracy" as well as the racial projects I identified in Chapter 2 all

serve to provide ready made rationales for the continued privileging of white people at the expense of people of color. Moreover, white American norms and values are not only woven into the fabric of people's daily lives here in the United States, but increasingly, in countries around the world where western (U.S.) norms and values are exported for consumption.

The opportunity for white anti-racism educators to play a role in re-engaging white people in the conversation about racism and its impact on all of our lives lies at the heart of what these white anti-racism educators talked about when they discussed pedagogical concerns, their own learning and discovery, or what they think about whiteness. An understanding of how internalized dominance develops, exists, and can be confronted/changed is at the center of understanding what constitutes whiteness. Each participant discussed the individual level of how whiteness manifests through white people, and helping white people get "in touch with their whiteness" was a consistent theme in the findings. Their challenge is to represent these various concepts and ideas – from a critical anti-racist perspective – without resulting in mere performance. Such a difficult task requires sophisticated ways of thinking about whiteness, and it calls upon them to have explored how whiteness is manifested in their own lives, and how it impacts their own teaching styles.

The purpose of this study was to explore how white anti-racism educators understand and address whiteness in their teaching. The literature review revealed an incomplete understanding of how whiteness is understood and addressed by white anti-racism educators. Thus, this study sought to deepen and extend our understanding of how whiteness is understood and can be addressed by white anti-racism educators. Whiteness

is conceptualized as ideology, culture, power, and privilege among these white anti-racist educators, and this study is borne of their experience – grounded in high trust relationships with people of color. The implications for both theory and practice reside in this research's examination of how these white anti-racism educators can begin a new, and perhaps more engaging, conversation with white people about racism.

Recommendations

A question that has been taped on a card near my desk since the beginning of this research project is "consider the implications of a white researcher interviewing white anti-racism educators about whiteness." I had taped this note near my computer not to encourage a self-indulgent, wringing of the hands white liberalism that can be seductive for a white researcher trying to be vigilant about the impact of his own whiteness on the research project, but to remind myself that this is challenging terrain to cover *and* that my research project is a worthwhile pursuit. This was a reminder for me about two separate truths that highlight this work: the value of this research project is derived from how the conclusions support the movement for racial justice *and* understanding how white people can work more effectively for racial justice is just one piece of this puzzle. This project cannot simply be an academic exercise – too much is at stake; the notion of researching "whiteness" for research's sake does little more than essentialize it. Most white people (and people of color as well, I suspect) have little information about the role anti-racist whites have played in the movement for racial justice, and there is certainly value in having more white anti-racist role models. Moreover, it is essential that white anti-racism

educators not re-center whiteness, take over the process, or contribute to the mainstreaming and privileging of the "white perspective" on racism.

Having raised this personal/political/pragmatic dilemma, the question on my desk kept resurfacing for me at different phases of this project. At the onset, developing the primary research question and the related research questions were driven by my own interest in understanding the connections between "critical white studies" or "whiteness" and "anti-racism education," and how the investigation and understanding of this emerging body of literature could inform my own anti-racist practice. My own reading of "whiteness" studies texts engaged me at a very deep level. I was challenged by authors, such as Frankenberg (1997) and Haney-Lopez (1996), in thinking differently about how racism was constructed and the role of white people in maintaining the legacy of racism. Concurrently, I was interested in how white anti-racism educators engaged participants and students. While I was interested in how white anti-racism educators are perceived by people of color and by white people, my own self-interest in how to "do this work better" was an overriding question for me. Given all this, the research question is itself white-centric and is grounded in my own struggles around aligning with progressive racial causes.

The guidelines that I highlighted in Chapter 5 offer a useful starting point for me in thinking about my own anti-racism education practice. As a recommendation, these guidelines can form the basis for exploring professional practice and a framework for developing capabilities and skills. The guidelines, coupled with the mutually reinforcing processes I noted, offer anti-racism educators an additional lens to consider the role of whiteness in anti-racism education.

Future researchers will have an opportunity to explore some of these issues further. In particular, assessing the effectiveness of these white anti-racism educators' teaching strategies on white participants is one key area for further attention. This research project focused on the perspective of the educator, not of the participant; however, understanding the participants' perspectives would be an important consideration in determining overall efficacy. Likewise, further research into the perspective of participants of color is an important consideration. How are the voices, interests, and needs of participants of color taken into consideration? While most of the participants in this study indicated that they collaborate with others in their anti-racism education, understanding the perspective of their educational partner could also potentially support a deeper understanding of the efficacy of including whiteness in overall anti-racism education. Finally, a more in-depth analysis of how white identity development intersects with the decision by white people to become engaged in long-term anti-racism education as a facilitator/teacher would support a better understanding of how motivation is connected to work/life decisions to become a white anti-racism educator.

My hope is that this research project has provided new insight into an emerging area in anti-racism education: the inclusion of whiteness studies into the anti-racism curricula. For white educators, this new way of examining materials, accounts, and questions is fraught with challenges, yet it also opens up new opportunities to engage white participants and participants of color. Understanding what whiteness means, how it has evolved, and what it illuminates can support the broadening of anti-racism work, while it reframes old approaches and refashions old tools. For anti-racism educators,

there is much to be gained by the inclusion of whiteness – if there is a genuine willingness to really own it and, then, light the way. And for that, I am ready to engage in a new dialogue.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

THE CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS BY WHITE ANTI-RACISM EDUCATORS

CONSENT FOR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

I volunteer to participate in the qualitative study and understand that:

1. Michael Burchell, using a guided interview format consisting of fifteen questions, will interview me.

2. The questions I will be answering address my views on how I have come to understand whiteness, and how I think about whiteness in the context of my work. I understand that the purpose of this study is to examine how white anti-racism educators understand and address whiteness in their teaching.

3. The process will be a single interview, lasting in duration between ninety and one hundred and twenty minutes. The interview will be tape recorded to facilitate analysis of the data.

4. My name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researcher will know my identity as a participant. My identity will be protected by the use of a pseudonym in the dissertation; I understand, however, that I will be quoted directly from the interview.

5. I may withdraw from part or all of this study at any time. I am free to participate or not to participate without prejudice. Should I decide to withdraw from this study, any data collected will be confidentially recycled.

6. I understand that results from this survey will be included in Michael Burchell's doctoral dissertation and may also be used in conference presentations and/or manuscripts submitted to professional journals for publication.

7. The expected benefits associated with my participation are the information I will receive about how whiteness is constructed for use by social justice educators, and the opportunity to participate in a qualitative research study.

8. I understand that despite all efforts to ensure anonymity, there is some risk that I might be identified as a participant in the study. There are no other known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The purpose of this interview is to develop an understanding about how white anti-racism educators understand and address whiteness in their work. As someone who is involved in research and education regarding whiteness, you are in a unique position to provide key insights into how social justice educators conceptualize whiteness and explore it in teaching/training. And that is what this interview is about: your thoughts, insights, and experiences regarding how you conceptualize whiteness in your role as an anti-racism educator.

The answers from all the people I interview will be combined for this dissertation. Nothing you say will ever be identified with you personally. As we go through the interview, if you have any questions about why I am asking something, please feel free to ask. Or if there is anything you do not want to answer, just say so. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Focus: *What, Why, and How* questions. Ask to *define* and *provide examples*.

1. Rapport Building: Explore interest in anti-racism work.
   - What kind of anti-racism work do you do? In what contexts and why?
   - What led you to become anti-racist educator?
   - Can you describe your journey in doing this work?
   - How do you identify yourself racially?
   - How does your identity influence or impact your anti-racism work? Why?
2. Anti-Racism Education: Explore their practice.
   - How do you describe your anti-racism education?
   - What key concepts or models guide your anti-racism teaching? Have these changed over time? If so, how?
   - What do you believe are the key learning goals or outcomes? Have these changed over time? If so, how?
   - Can you describe your teaching style as an anti-racism educator? Has this changed over time? If so, what influenced these changes?
   - How do you sustain your energy and commitment to this work?
3. Whiteness: Exploring the meaning of whiteness.
   - How do you define whiteness? What are its critical components?
   - How have you come to this definition? How has you understanding and experience of whiteness changed?
   - What role does whiteness play in your anti-racism teaching? How do you teach whiteness?
   - What are the key concepts in understanding how to interrupt whiteness? How does this understanding inform your anti-racism teaching?
4. Closure: Anything you would like to add that you think is important to my understanding of whiteness?

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